RED LETTER DAY P Y

WARREN, OHIO.

RED LETTER DAY PLAYS

BY

MARGARET GETCHELL PARSONS
Author of "The Cloud Bird,"
"Spruce Cone and Bunchberry,"
"Colette of the Red Cross"

793

THE WOMANS PRESS
NEW YORK CITY

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FROM MARCIE DETSY
TO HER SISTER
"DEAR"
IN MEMORY OF
THE PLAYS THEY USED TO GIVE

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FOREWORD

"The play's the thing," said Hamlet, way back in the days when the elaborate scenery, lighting effects and costuming of to-day were unknown. At the time those words were written the greatest of Shakespeare's dramas were given their first performance on a bare stage. To-day we have gone to the opposite extreme, and even the simplest child's play often has costumes and scenery which represent many hours of work.

In fact, too many plays for boys and girls are like the famous charades of the Peterkin family, when the actors spent so much time in selling tickets, collecting the costumes and the bandboxes which might be needed, building a stage, hanging a curtain, erecting scenery and borrowing chairs, that not until the audience was seated did they find time to decide upon the words they were to act. In some communities mothers have come to dread the closing of school, or the Christmas and May festivals, because each one means preparing elaborate costumes and helping to make complicated stage sets.

This book was written because one group of boys and girls who loved to act had difficulty in finding

simple plays which they could give without the costumes and scenery becoming a tax upon those who helped them. In fact, they liked to do it all themselves and could make an excellent stage by cutting off one end of their living room with a curtain or screen. Better still, in the summer time, their porch served as a raised stage, with the whole lawn below for amphitheatre, while the May day plays were given on the lawn itself, with the porch for the audience. They had learned that, if they put most of their time in rehearsing until they could enter into the spirit of each character and play with sympathy and understanding, no one cared whether scenery, stage and costumes were simple or elaborate. They discovered how to disguise their own clothes by a touch here or a twist there, until a satin-lined coat, wrong-side out, with a bit of lace in the cuffs, would suggest the spirit of '76, or a rainbow scarf over a white dress, with some tinsel borrowed from the Christmas tree, would have the enchantment of fairyland. The series of *Rainy Day Plays* is most simple of all, for they can be cast, rehearsed, costumed and given at a club meeting, or in a single afternoon, when it is too rainy to go outdoors.

It goes without saying that a real stage, footlights and a property chest worthy of the name would not be found amiss, "if you happen ter have any handy," as Clement McGrill Ruggles said about the "cramb'ry sarse"; but if they aren't right there,

you can do wonders by using two screens to mark off a stage and putting together twentieth century clothes in a seventeenth century combination. For you know very well that the real enjoyment, both for those in the play and for those looking on, comes from the acting itself. This book carries with it the hope that it may bring such pleasure to many of you boys and girls, and that, by its help, the holidays may truly be lettered in red ink on the calendars of your lives.

M. G. P.

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FIRE SPIRITS

A True Hallowe'en Story of Long Ago

CHARACTERS

ENDURANCE
PRUDENCE
two little Puritan girls
GOODMAN, *their father*
CONSTANCE, *their mother*
TWO INDIANS

FIRE SPIRITS *

TIME—*October, in colonial days.*

PLACE—*A Massachusetts farm-house.*

SCENE—*The room of a Puritan farm-house with colonial furniture, fireplace, etc. At the back, on the left, is a large woodbox, without cover and with rail along the edge; at the right, a door. An unlighted candle is on the table.* CONSTANCE, *the mother, sits at the right at a spinning-wheel;* PRUDENCE, *on her little stool, by the fireplace, works a sampler;* ENDURANCE *is brushing up the hearth with a turkey wing. They wear Puritan costumes.* ENDURANCE *is the older.*

CONSTANCE—I fear winter will be upon us before I have spun enough cloth for your father's winter clothes. It is already almost the end of October and Thanksgiving will soon be here.

ENDURANCE—But Hallowe'en comes first.

PRUDENCE—O mother, may I have a pumpkin for a Hallowe'en Jack-o'-lantern?

CONSTANCE—Perhaps, if you work hard on your sampler.

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PRUDENCE—I am working hard on it. It is almost done now. [*Runs to mother to show it to her.*] See, I have only this rose and the date to do. I love to do the rose, but the date isn't so pretty.

CONSTANCE—Then I should do the date first, that I might have the rose to look forward to.

[PRUDENCE *goes back to seat. Enter* GOODMAN.]

GOODMAN [*to* CONSTANCE]—Are you going to the village with me, Constance?

CONSTANCE—I want to go very much. Mistress Experience is ill and wishes to see me. But what think you of leaving the children alone? It is already growing dark.

GOODMAN—There are only Indians to fear, and they are all friendly to us.

CONSTANCE—Yes, yes, that is so—especially since I gave the Chief Ketetaw some medicine for his aged father.

GOODMAN [*to* CHILDREN]—Even though night came on before we could get back, you would not be afraid to stay alone while we go to the village, would you, children?

ENDURANCE *and* PRUDENCE—Why, of course not!

PRUDENCE—The Indians are our good friends. They bring us pretty presents and let us play with their little papooses.

CONSTANCE—The children are right, the Indians are friendly. Let us go then.

ENDURANCE—We can play house. I'll be the father and Prudence the mother.

PRUDENCE [*picking up her corn-cob doll*]: Yes, and Hope can be the baby. I shall cook a nice dinner for you, Hope.

GOODMAN—There are some pumpkins that must be rolled in before nightfall. Do you think you can do that, little housekeepers?

ENDURANCE—O, yes. And may we have some for Jack-o'-lanterns?

GOODMAN—You may have two.

CONSTANCE—They are very hard, so be careful not to cut yourselves with the knife. [*Puts on shawl.* GOODMAN *and* CONSTANCE *go.*]

ENDURANCE—Come, Prudence, put away your sampler and let us roll in the pumpkins now. Haven't you finished your stint for to-day?

PRUDENCE—Yes, I have done more than my stint because I am in such a hurry to get to the rose. [PRUDENCE *puts up work. They go out; then back and forth rolling in pumpkins. They work very hard and are too busy to talk. They pile them up in the left of the room.*]

PRUDENCE—[*Putting down the last pumpkin and sitting on it with a sigh*]: There, that is the last one.

ENDURANCE—Now, which one do you choose for your Jack-o'-lantern?

PRUDENCE—I like this one I am sitting on. He is so fat and jolly!

ENDURANCE—This will be mine. He has a long thin face like a witch.

PRUDENCE—[*Going for knife*]: Here is the knife. My, isn't it sharp!

ENDURANCE—Be careful. You'd better let me scoop them out.

PRUDENCE—But you can't scoop them out in here. Remember, I am playing I am Mother, and she never would be so untidy. Just think what an example that would be to Hope.

ENDURANCE—We can take them out behind the barn, then.

PRUDENCE—All right.

[*They roll out the two pumpkins. There is a pause of a few minutes or the curtain may go down and up to show a lapse of time. The light should be lessened. Then children enter carrying two Jack-o'-lanterns, cut but not lighted.*]

PRUDENCE—[*Timidly*] Oh, how dark it is getting!

ENDURANCE—Don't be afraid. We will light a candle. [*Lights candle, apparently from fire, and puts it on table.*]

PRUDENCE—I wish Mother and Father would come home. The candle does not make it very light.

ENDURANCE—[*Trying to cheer her*]: Oh, we mustn't be frightened. Remember, you are playing you are Mother and you wouldn't want Hope to see you afraid, would you?

PRUDENCE—No, of course I shouldn't. [*Picks up doll and speaks to her bravely.*] Now, Hope, you mustn't be afraid. I'll take care of you.

ENDURANCE—Come, look at my Jack. He is all done except his teeth. We have to notch the teeth.

PRUDENCE—Let's do it now. [*They sit on floor with Jacks in front of them and notch teeth.*]

ENDURANCE—Mother says they used to have parties in England on Hallowe'en when they bobbed for apples and told fortunes.

PRUDENCE—I wish we could have a party.

ENDURANCE—Perhaps we can ask Faith and Patience out from the village.

PRUDENCE—Oh, wouldn't that be fun? The Jacks are so fine I want some one to see them.

ENDURANCE—There, his teeth are all made. Now the only thing left is the candles.

PRUDENCE—We must have short ones.

ENDURANCE—I know where mother keeps the stubs. I'll run and get them. [PRUDENCE *puts the Jacks at left of stage so that faces cannot be seen from the door, while* ENDURANCE *gets the candles. Voices outside*]

PRUDENCE—Oh, Mother and Father are back. Goodie! Goodie! [*Jumps up and down, clapping hands. Runs to window or door. Cries out in surprise and terror. Looks about room, not knowing where to go. Sees woodbox. Runs to it and jumps into it, hiding. Two Indians creep in cautiously. Their faces are covered with war paint and they*

carry tomahawks. Seeing no one in the room, they stand and look about them. One sees candle and speaks to other in his native language, pointing to it. They go around room, but do not see PRUDENCE. *One goes to door and points outward, saying,* "Pale-face!" *Indians go out.* PRUDENCE *gets out of box, terrified. Enter* ENDURANCE.]

ENDURANCE—See all the candles I found——

PRUDENCE—[*Interrupting her*]: Oh, Endurance, Endurance, the Indians are here!

ENDURANCE—What Indians?

PRUDENCE—Two awful Indians. They came in and crept all around the room. I hid in the wood-box.

ENDURANCE—But the Indians are our friends.

PRUDENCE—These weren't. They looked different, and wore different clothes from our friends.

ENDURANCE—Then they must belong to another tribe.

PRUDENCE—And their faces were of all colors.

ENDURANCE—[*Now convinced and frightened*]: Oh, perhaps it was war paint!

PRUDENCE—Oh, dear; oh, dear! What can we do? [*Begins to cry.*]

ENDURANCE—It's no use crying. What can we do? Did they say anything?

PRUDENCE—Yes; they pointed to the candles and grunted something.

ENDURANCE—Oh, why did we light the candles! That tells them that some one is in the house.

PRUDENCE—They pointed to the barn, I could see them through the crack, and they said, "Pale-face!" When they do not find any one there they will come back.

ENDURANCE—Can we both hide in the woodbox?

PRUDENCE—They will be sure to look more carefully next time and will find us.

ENDURANCE—We can't shoot. If we could only scare them away!

PRUDENCE—But how?

ENDURANCE—[*Seeing Jack-o'-lantern*]: I know, the Jack-o'-lanterns!

PRUDENCE—The Jack-o'-lanterns?

ENDURANCE—Yes. Get into the woodbox. [PRUDENCE *gets in.*] The Indians won't know what they are. Mother says they are always afraid of things they don't understand. [ENDURANCE *hands her two Jacks and candle stubs.*] We must take this candle to light them with.

PRUDENCE—Quick! I hear them coming!

[ENDURANCE *gets in with lighted candle. The room is now quite dark. After a short pause the Indians creep in. They look about the room a minute. One notices the candle has vanished. He points to the place on the table where it was, speaking to the other to draw his attention to its having gone. They are just starting to search the room, when the lighted Jack-o'-lanterns begin slowly to rise above the top of the woodbox, and are set on the rail. The Indians stand looking at them in amaze-*

ment. For a minute they hesitate, dumb with horror. Then, uttering terrified yells, they drop their tomahawks and flee. The yells become fainter and fainter. Then all is silence.]

PRUDENCE'S VOICE—Are they gone, Endurance?

ENDURANCE—I think they must be. I'll peep.

PRUDENCE—Oh, be careful; be careful! [ENDURANCE'S *head appears. She peeps cautiously around the edge of Jack.*]

ENDURANCE—Yes, they're gone.

PRUDENCE—Are you sure?

ENDURANCE—Quite sure. Look for yourself.

PRUDENCE—I don't dare.

ENDURANCE—Oh, they have really gone. [PRUDENCE'S *head appears.*]

PRUDENCE—You nice old Jack! [*Puts her arms around it.*] Do you know, you saved us? Yes, you did.

ENDURANCE—We might be scalped now if it weren't for you. [*To* PRUDENCE] Did you ever see any one so scared as they were?

PRUDENCE—And such big, wild Indians, too! I'd be ashamed to be so scared of a Jack-o'-lantern!

ENDURANCE—Come on, let's get out.

PRUDENCE—You can, if you want to, but I am going to stay behind my Jack, if I have to stay here all night.

ENDURANCE—Aren't you hungry?

PRUDENCE—Yes, but I am more scared than I am hungry. They may come back any time.

ENDURANCE—Hark! I hear something! [*Both disappear. Steps heard outside. Mother and Father rush in. In the semi-darkness* CONSTANCE *stumbles over tomahawk.*]

CONSTANCE—[*Terrified*] Goodman, a tomahawk! Oh, my children! My children!

ENDURANCE *and* PRUDENCE—[*Reappearing above the Jacks, cry joyously*]: Mother! Father! Father! Mother!

CONSTANCE—Prudence! Endurance!

GOODMAN—Oh, children, children, you are safe!

[*Children clamber out and rush to parents.* PRUDENCE *runs to Mother, who sinks into a chair, and buries head in her lap, crying*]: "Mother! Mother!"

ENDURANCE—Oh, we are so glad you have come!

PRUDENCE—It was so dark, and they might have scalped us!

CONSTANCE—Who might have scalped you?

ENDURANCE—The Indians.

GOODMAN—What Indians?

ENDURANCE—Two Indians came.

PRUDENCE—And we scared them away with our Jack-o'-lanterns.

GOODMAN—[*To* CONSTANCE] That must have been what Ketetaw meant.

ENDURANCE—Ketetaw wasn't with them.

GOODMAN—No, but we saw him on the road from the village. He said he had met two Indians of a hostile tribe running away from here. They were

too frightened even to fight him, but they stopped to call out that there were fire-spirits living in this house, and they vowed they would never come near it again. We were alarmed to know what it meant and rushed home.

ENDURANCE—[*Laughing and pointing to Jacks*]: They thought our Jacks were fire-spirits!

PRUDENCE—Our good Jacks saved our lives from the bad Indians. We will call them our brothers.

ENDURANCE—Our good brothers, the fire spirits!

Curtain.

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

A Thanksgiving Moving Picture

CHARACTERS

Captain Miles Standish
John Alden
Priscilla
One or more Pilgrims
One or more Indians

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH *

A Thanksgiving Moving Picture

This play is an adaptation of the old-time shadow pictures to become an amateur "movie" of today. It may be given in a private house, using one end of the living room as a stage.

Stretch a sheet across the room from four to six feet from the back. Have a bright light in the very back, at the center, three or four feet from the floor. The room in front of the screen should be dark.

The play takes place behind and very near the screen. In playing, keep your side always to it, so that your features will show in the shadow picture you make. Act like a moving picture actor, using many gestures, and moving your lips when you pretend to talk.

Have each member of the cast read over carefully The Courtship of Miles Standish, *by* Longfellow, *before beginning to rehearse.*

As the costumes do not show except in outline, no attention need be paid to their color and material. The Pilgrim men wear knickerbockers or girls' bloomers, bound around the bottom with a bandage, which, in the shadow, will give the effect of high

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boots. They wear Norfolk jackets. For hats, make large brims of pasteboard and slip them over soft hats, with the crowns poked up as high as possible.

PRISCILLA *wears a dress with a long, full skirt, a kerchief, and a cap, which can be made out of a handkerchief.*

The Indians wear suits or blankets and have feathers in their hair. The Pilgrims may carry guns, and the Indians, bows and arrows.

The properties and furniture are: Two high-back chairs, a spinning wheel, a pad, a quill pen, a snake skin, arrows, a powder horn and bullets. Most of them can be made of cloth or pasteboard. A spinning wheel can be made by attaching a bicycle wheel to an overturned chair, leaving the wheel free to spin.

One person stands in front of the screen and reads the lines on the left-hand column, marked "Read." The reading corresponds to the explanations cast on the screen in the captions of a real moving picture. It would add much if selections from the poem could also be read.

Between the parts, put out the light behind the screen and turn on the light in the audience. This will show that the preceding part is ended and will give time to change the furniture.

Experiment carefully with the light in rehearsing, as a wrong arrangement will make the shadows ludicrously tall or short. As you practice, develop the pantomime and remember to act slowly.

Before the play begins the reader announces:

[Name of group] and Company present the motion picture, "THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH," taken directly from LONGFELLOW'S immortal poem and produced on the screen for the first time in America. [*The members of the cast are then introduced one by one.*]

PART 1

Read	ACTED
John Alden writes home to England, telling much about Priscilla.	*There are two old-fashioned chairs behind the screen at right angles to it.* JOHN ALDEN *enters with pad and long quill pen. He sits and writes.*
Captain Miles Standish has something weighty on his mind.	*Enter* MILES STANDISH. *He paces up and down the floor, deep in thought.* ALDEN *continues to write.* STANDISH *speaks to* ALDEN, *who puts up his writing.*
Miles Standish wishes to marry Priscilla. Instead of going to her himself, he sends John Alden to ask her for him.	STANDISH *makes the request.* ALDEN *objects, trying to persuade him to go himself.* STANDISH *refuses.* ALDEN, *in dis-*

Alden, who is also in love with her, objects, but finally consents to go.	*tress, finally goes.* [*They should use their hands in arguing.*] STANDISH *goes off one side,* ALDEN *the other.*

PART 2

READ	ACTED
Priscilla takes up her spinning.	PRISCILLA *enters, goes to side of stage and gets spinning wheel. She sits before it and spins.* ALDEN *enters and stands looking at her for a minute. She looks up, sees him, runs to him, holding out her hand.*
"I knew it was you when I heard your step in the passage, for I was thinking of you as I sat there spinning and singing."	ALDEN *gives her a bunch of flowers. They sit and talk.*
Alden asks for her hand for Captain Standish.	*He is at first awkward and lets her do the talking. Then he starts. She*

holds forth both hands as if to say she does not want to marry the captain. He leans over, pleading earnestly. At last she rises, looks at him and speaks.

"Why don't you speak for yourself, John?"

ALDEN *looks at her, starts to go forward, then stops, and rushes towards the door. She runs after him as if to call him back, then changes her mind, puts back spinning wheel and goes off.*

PART 3

READ	ACTED
Back in the house of Standish and Alden.	*Enter* STANDISH. *Sits. Enter* ALDEN. *He tells the story.* STANDISH *listens quietly.*
"Why don't you speak for yourself, John?" she said.	*At these words* STANDISH *jumps up and rushes upon* ALDEN, *very angry. Takes out sword*

as if to kill him; then stops, but gesticulates and talks angrily.

"Let there be nothing between us save war and implacable hatred," said the Captain.

STANDISH *speaks, and* ALDEN *backs away from him. Enter Indian.* STANDISH *goes to him, and they talk by signs.*

[*This part is changed from the poem because the council would be difficult to do.*]

The Indian gives Miles Standish a rattlesnake, the challenge of warfare.

Miles Standish accepts the challenge by filling the skin with powder and bullets.

Indian gives STANDISH *skin, which he looks at a minute. Then in anger he pulls out the arrows which have been put in the skin and throws them from him. He gets powder and bullets, with which he fills the skin. He hands skin back to Indian. Indian goes out. Standish takes his sword and belt, and without looking at* ALDEN *he goes out.* ALDEN, *his head in his hands, goes off crestfallen.*

Part 4

Read	Acted
Standish and the chief, Wattawamat, exchange gifts.	Standish and Wattawamat *meet and exchange gifts as described in the poem,* Part 7. *Only the two need be shown, though it would be better to have spectators. Then they suspect each other and quarrel.*
Standish and Wattawamat, suspicious of each other, quarrel and fight.	Standish *and* Wattawamat *fight, and* Standish *overcomes the Indian, who falls to the ground.*

Part 5

Read	Acted
Some months later.	Priscilla *comes on with her wheel and goes to spinning as before. Enter* Alden. *They talk. She beckons him to hold her skein for her. He does so, while she winds it. Enter a messenger.*

"Miles Standish is dead."	*The messenger speaks. For a moment they sit still, silently, overcome with grief. Then* ALDEN *puts his arm around* PRISCILLA *and leads her off.*

PART 6

READ	ACTED
The wedding day.	*Enter the Elder. Stands, facing side, at right, with prayer book in his hand. Enter* ALDEN *and* PRISCILLA, *and stand before him so that they both cast shadows.*
As the service is ended, a form appears on the threshold.	*Enter* STANDISH. *All start in amazement. Then* STANDISH *goes to* ALDEN *and grasps his hand.*
Standish, who has not been killed, asks forgiveness, and wishes all joy to the bridal couple.	*All go off happily.*

THE CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

CHARACTERS

Charlotte
Mother
Pippa
Hiawatha
Alice in Wonderland
Bell Girl
Peasblossom
Cobweb
Mustardseed
Moth
the Fairies
Tar Baby
Tiny Tim

THE CHRISTMAS MESSAGE *

SCENE—CHARLOTTE'S *room, chair left front, bookcase, right back. At back is a row of books, about four feet high. The back bindings, which are all that show, are made of pasteboard or pieces of cloth, hung from a frame, with the names of the books pasted on them, like the labels on books. In the first scene they are covered with cloth.*

COSTUMES—CHARLOTTE *and* MOTHER *wear house dresses.* PIPPA *wears light summer dress and carries basket of flowers. She wears large straw hat.* HIAWATHA *wears Indian costume. If unable to get regular costume, use Indian blanket with beads and feather in hair.* ALICE *has long, straight, light hair hanging down her back. She wears short cotton dress, pinafore, white stockings and black slippers with one strap across.* PUCK *has elf's costume of green and brown.* FAIRIES *wear fairy costumes. Scarfs of delicate shades, over white dresses, with bits of tinsel will do.* TAR BABY *should be played by the smallest person in the cast. He*

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is a very black, roly-poly little pickaninny, and wears a blouse, knickerbockers and large straw hat. TINY TIM *is dressed like a small boy of Dickens' time, and has a crutch.* BELL GIRL *can wear any kind of costume so long as it is strung with bells.*

PROPERTIES—*Basket, bundles, red ribbon, Christmas card, books.*

MUSIC—*Final song is to tune of* O, HAPPY BELLS OF CHRISTMAS, *by* CARL PFLUEGER, *in* A BOOK OF SONG AND SERVICE, *published by the Unitarian Sunday School Society, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts.*

SCENE I—CHARLOTTE *is discovered sitting L. F., doing up Christmas presents, tying them with red ribbon, and putting spray of holly in each. Her mother is helping her.*

CHARLOTTE—There, mother, they are all tied up, and don't they look pretty?

MOTHER—Yes, indeed, they do. Put them in this basket and you can carry them over to Grandma's in the morning.

CHARLOTTE [*Putting them in basket*] All right. Now, where is the big card to tie on the basket?

MOTHER—Here it is. Are you going to write the names on it? It's a very pretty card.

CHARLOTTE—Mother, it's such a beautiful card, don't you think it would be nice to put a verse on it, a Christmas verse?

MOTHER—Why, yes; I think that would be lovely.

What verse do you think of?

CHARLOTTE—You tell me one.

MOTHER—No, find it yourself, dear.

CHARLOTTE—But I can't find any; I don't know where to look.

MOTHER—Look in your books. I know there is something appropriate in them.

CHARLOTTE—Oh, do you think so? Well, I'll look.

MOTHER—I'll go do up my own packages. Bring in your basket when you have found the verse. [*Exit*]

CHARLOTTE—All right. [CHARLOTTE *sits on stool by book case. Takes down book and turns pages sleepily.*] "Little Women." Yes, Jo, you are just the most cheery Christmas-y mortal that ever lived, but why don't you say something appropriate? I wish you would! I—wish—you—would!—I—wish you——would!

Curtain.

SCENE II—CHARLOTTE *is still sitting asleep; curtain has been pulled off artificial book covers.* CHARLOTTE *awakens slowly and looks intently at books.* LITTLE WOMEN *has fallen on floor.*

CHARLOTTE—Why, how big my books are growing! How queer they look! They are almost as tall as I am. They ought to have lots of appropriate verses in them now.

[*She touches one book. The back is pushed aside, and out steps* PIPPA. *She is very happy, and fairly*

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dances to the front of the stage. CHARLOTTE, *watching her, comes down stage.*]

PIPPA—The year's at the spring
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hillside's dew pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in His heaven—
All's right with the world!

[*This may be either recited or sung.*]

CHARLOTTE—That would be a beautiful verse to put on an Easter present or a basket of spring flowers, but I'm afraid it won't do for Christmas.

PIPPA—Oh, do you want something for Christmas? I didn't understand. I only knew you wanted me to come out, so I came. But HIAWATHA lives in the book next to me, and he knows all kinds of things, —he ought to know what you want.

CHARLOTTE—Yes, he is just the one. Do call him for me.

PIPPA—No, you call him. We all come when *you* call.

CHARLOTTE—[*Leaning towards books*] Hiawatha! Hiawatha!

HIAWATHA—[*Appearing*] Here I am.

CHARLOTTE—Hiawatha, you can give me the message I want, for PIPPA says you know messages for everything.

HIAWATHA—No, not for everything.

CHARLOTTE—Well, what kind of things *do* you know?

HIAWATHA—

I've learned of every bird its language,
Learned their names and all their secrets,
How they built their nests in Summer,
Where they hid themselves in Winter,
Talked with them whene'er I met them,
Called them Hiawatha's chickens.
Of all beasts I learned the language,
Learned their names and all their secrets,
How the beavers built their lodges,
Where the squirrels hid their acorns,
How the reindeer ran so swiftly,
Why the rabbit was so timid,
Talked with them whene'er I met them,
Called them Hiawatha's Brothers.

CHARLOTTE—And did any of the birds or the beasts ever tell you a message for Christmas?

HIAWATHA—No, they never taught me the message or the secret of Christmas, because Indians don't have any Christmas.

[*Sound. He puts hand to ear like an Indian and listens.*]

Hark!

[*There is another thump inside of* ALICE IN WONDERLAND. *Out steps a little girl in the conventional Alice costume, brushing herself off and smoothing out her apron.*]

ALICE—My, what a fall! I wonder how many miles I've fallen by this time. I must be getting somewhere near the center of the earth. Let me see: that would be four thousand miles down, I think —yes, that's about the right distance—but I wonder what Latitude and Longitude I've got to. [*Sees others.*] I shall have to ask them what the name of the country is. Please, Ma'am, [*courtesying to* CHARLOTTE] is this New Zealand or Australia? [*All laugh.*] Why, dear me, it's CHARLOTTE, and I haven't fallen out of her room yet. [*Looking around*] And I do believe you are having a party and I'm just in time, although of course I really wasn't invited.

CHARLOTTE—Of course you are invited, Alice. But it isn't a party. It's only a meeting.

ALICE—A meeting? What for?

CHARLOTTE—To find a verse for my Christmas basket that I'm going to carry to Grandma's tomorrow. Do you know any verse that would do?

ALICE—Why, of course, plenty of them. Do you want me to repeat one?

CHARLOTTE—Yes, do.

[ALICE *makes a little bow and recites*]:

ALICE—

How doth the little crocodile,
Improve his shining tail,
And pour the waters of the Nile
On every golden scale!

How cheerfully he seems to grin,
How neatly spreads his claws,
[*Spreads out her hands*]
And welcomes little fishes in
[*Draws hands towards her as if gathering fishes in.*]
With gently smiling jaws.

[*All clap.*]

ALICE—I'm not so sure those are the right words, but I think it will do.

CHARLOTTE—It's very nice indeed, but I'm sure it *won't* do at all. It hasn't a thing in the world to do with Christmas day.

ALICE—But it has just as much to do with Christmas day as with any other day——

[*Slight tinkle of bells.*]

HIAWATHA—[*Interrupting*] Hark! Is that a Christmas bell ringing?

CHARLOTTE—Yes, it must be. The sound seems to come from over there, in my book of the world's famous poems. Open it, Hiawatha.

[HIAWATHA *opens book, the* BELL-GIRL *steps out; she has a string of tiny bells around her neck, and bells hung from her arms and other parts of her costume. She dances down stage, running from one character to another and jingling her bells playfully in their faces. As she comes to* CHARLOTTE, *she stops and recites. The poem should be chanted to the delicate accompaniment of tinkling bells.*]

BELL-GIRL—

Hear the sledges with the bells—
Silver bells!
What a world of merriment their melody foretells!
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
In the icy air of night!
While the stars that oversprinkle
All the heavens, seem to twinkle
With a crystalline delight;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the tintinnabulation that so musically wells
From the bells, bells, bells, bells, bells, bells, bells,—
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

CHARLOTTE—That is the best yet, for it really does suggest Christmas. And yet, it is hardly the right message——

ALICE—I shouldn't call that a message at all.

BELL-GIRL—Why not try Puck? If there is nothing in this world to answer your purpose, we can call on Fairyland. And Puck is very chummy with all the fairies of "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

CHARLOTTE—Will you call him, Hiawatha?

HIAWATHA—I am afraid he will not come to me. He is a wary little fairy, and is hard to coax out of fairyland.

ALICE—[*Who has gone over to the "Midsummer Night's Dream" and been trying to open it.*] How very provoking to have it lock itself up so tight, just when we want to get it open!

PIPPA—I am sure the fairies would be attracted by the music of your bells.

BELL-GIRL—I'll try; hush! [*Goes to book and rings bells lightly. All watch, breathlessly; at last door opens a crack and* PUCK *sticks his head out a bit.* BELL-GIRL *has gone off R. F.* PUCK *comes out cautiously, then comes front, tripping lightly like a fairy. As he recites, there is a note of mystery in his voice, as though he were whispering fairy secrets.*]

PUCK—

Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire,
I do wander everywhere,
Swifter than the moon's sphere;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be;
In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours:
I must go seek some dewdrops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.

[*Runs back to book.*]

Come fairies! Come, help me in my task. Come, Peasblossom, and Cobweb, come Mustardseed and Moth.

[*As he speaks, fairy music plays and fairies dance*

out. They then do a fairy dance, which may be either elaborate or simple, as desired. Just as they are finishing the dance, they are interrupted by TAR BABY, *who comes rolling and tumbling into their midst, breaking up the dance and attracting the attention of everyone to him. Paying no attention to them, he walks down stage and sits down, his legs straight out in front of him. Fairies and all other characters crowd about him in wonder and curiosity.*

ALICE—Who are you?

PIPPA—Where do you come from?

BELL-GIRL—[*Jingling her bells*] Wake up and tell us your name.

HIAWATHA—Can't you speak?

CHARLOTTE—Do you know a Christmas verse?

[*Fairies tickle him, poke him, tweak his ear, and pull his clothing, but he remains motionless.*]

PUCK—[*Mysteriously*] Hush!

ALL—[*Leaning forward*] What is it?

PUCK—[*In a whisper, as all lean over to listen to him*] It's TAR BABY and "Tar Baby ain't sayin' nothin'."

[TAR BABY *looks up and winks.*]

CHARLOTTE, PIPPA, HIAWATHA, ALICE, PUCK, FAIRIES, BELL-GIRL —[*All together*]

Why, so it is,
You funny little tar baby!
How are you?
Hello, Tar Baby,
Say, howdie!
Howdie, Tar Baby!
Jing-a-ling, Tar Baby!

[BELL-GIRL *rings, everyone talks at once, and all is confusion.*]

ALICE—[*Coming down center of group, and pushing them back on both sides.*]

Order, order, I say! Silence! Stop this stuff and nonsense this instant! We are here to find a Christmas verse for Charlotte, and we haven't found one yet.

CHARLOTTE—[*In distressed tone*] No, and I don't see that we are any nearer than we were when we started, and it is almost supper time.

[*Everyone is distressed and the fairies burst into tears.*]

ALICE—Is everyone here?

CHARLOTTE—I think so. I've called for everybody.

HIAWATHA—Hark! I think I hear a sound.

[*There is a tap-tapping in Dickens'* CHRISTMAS CAROL.]

CHARLOTTE—Come out.

LITTLE VOICE INSIDE—I can't get out. I can't open the door myself.

[HIAWATHA *opens back of book. Enter* TINY TIM *with crutch.*]

EVERYONE—Oh, it's Tiny Tim. Welcome Tiny Tim. We forgot Tiny Tim, etc.

[EVERYONE *decides in advance what to say, and then all say it at the same time.*]

CHARLOTTE—Oh, Tiny Tim, you are just the one

we want. You live in a Christmas Carol, so you must know a verse for my Christmas card.

TINY TIM—I don't know any verses, because I never went to school, but if it were my card, I should put on it just "A Merry Christmas to you all, and God bless you every one!"

ALL—Bravo! Hoorah for Tiny Tim! The verse at last! [*Decide in advance what to say, as above.*]

[*Fairies join hands and dance around him; then join with children in song. Tune:* O HAPPY BELLS OF CHRISTMAS, *by* CARL PFLUEGER, FROM *A* BOOK OF SONG AND SERVICE.]

SONG—

In friendly contest we've been vying,
In secrets of the book-shelf prying,
For one and all have we been trying,
To find a verse for Charlotte's card.
So some from fairyland came flying,
While some in sad despair were sighing,

Retard—

And all of us were nigh to crying,
Because we found the task so hard.

A Tempo—

But—Tiny Tim, now he comes in,
Our troubles all are passed,
As we repeat his message sweet,—
The Christmas verse at last!
We all agree, as you can see,

The contest he has won,
A merry Christmas to you all,
God bless you, every one!

Curtain

ST. NICHOLAS

A Christmas Play

CHARACTERS

DICK, *a little boy* *
SANTA CLAUS [ST. NICHOLAS *in Act II*]
CALCHAS, *a Greek of the Fourth Century*
HESTIA, LARISSA, DORIS } *his daughters*
PENELOPE, *an old Greek woman*

* With a few simple changes the part of Dick may be adapted to a girl.

ST. NICHOLAS

TIME—ACTS I *and* III, *the present;* ACT II, *the fourth century A.D.*

PLACE—ACTS I *and* III, *America;* ACT II, *Patara, in Asia Minor.*

COSTUMES—*In* ACTS I *and* III: SANTA CLAUS *wears conventional costume,* DICK *a bath-robe and slippers. In* ACT II, *the girls wear loose-fitting Greek costumes;* CALCHAS, *a toga and chiton thrown over his shoulder;* PENELOPE, *a dark colored and rather shabby Greek gown.* HESTIA *and* LARISSA *have their hair arranged in psyche knots;* DORIS' *is down her back.*

Act 1

Scene—*Playroom. Two windows at back.* [*Only one is necessary.*] *Fireplace L. F. Large arm-chair before fireplace. Table in corner R. B. Clock on mantle pointing to twelve. Four children's stockings hung at fireplace.*

Curtain.

First Voice—[*Off*] Come on, Dick, wake up!

Second Voice—[*Off*] Go 'way, Tom. It isn't seven o'clock yet.

Tom—[*First Voice*] Wake up, wake up. What has seven o'clock got to do with it? Don't you remember we are taking turns watching for Santa Claus?

Dick [*Second Voice*]—Go along and don't bother me. My turn isn't until twelve o'clock.

Tom—It's twelve o'clock now, sleepy head. If you lie there any longer we will miss him.

Dick—[*Sleepily*] All right; I'll get up.

Tom—Well, hurry, then. Here's a slipper. [*Bang*] And here's another. [*Bang*] You watch until one o'clock and then call Charlotte.

[*Enter* Dick *in bath-robe and slippers and carrying a candle. He is very sleepy. He sets down the*

candle, then looks around him for something. Not finding it, he goes to door and calls to TOM.]

DICK—Tom!

[*No answer*]

Tom, are you asleep?

TOM [*Off. Very sleepy.*] No.

DICK—What did you do with the presents for Santa Claus?

TOM—I put them under the table.

DICK—And, Tom!

TOM—Lemme go 'sleep.

DICK—I want to ask you—Tom—Tom! [*No answer*] Needn't call me a sleepy head. [*Goes to table and looks at basket, then settles himself in big chair. He yawns, rubs his eyes to keep them open. In a minute he begins to nod. He rouses with an effort and looks at clock; it is only five or ten minutes past twelve. He takes a pin from his bathrobe and sticks it into himself, jumps, quite wide awake. He settles down again, and, after succeeding in rousing himself once or twice more, his eyes finally close and he begins to nod.*]

[*There is the sound of sleighbells outside and then a noise at the window. It opens slowly.* SANTA CLAUS *puts his head in to see if the room is empty. He does not see* DICK, *who is hidden by the high back of the chair. He then climbs in the window.* DICK *is awakened by the noise and peeps around the edge of the chair.* SANTA CLAUS *sets down his bag,*

stamps his feet, and rubs his hands. Suddenly he spies DICK's *little head.*]

SANTA—Oh, ho! What are you doing there, you young scamp?

DICK—[*Running to him*] Are you Santa Claus? Really, Santa Claus?

SANTA—Of course I am. And you are Dick?

DICK—[*Delighted*] Yes. How did you know?

SANTA—What a question! Why, I know every boy and girl in Christendom. There are a good many who wait up for me, too; but I don't generally let them see me. You are a sly young one to turn the back of your chair to the window.

DICK—Oh, I didn't do it for that. I thought, of course you would come down the chimney.

SANTA—So I would, if you had respectable sized chimneys. But these miserable modern affairs aren't big enough to hold *me*, let alone my pack. No, my chimney days are over—at least in the cities. I have to come in now like a common burglar.

DICK—Oh, you are much nicer than a common burglar. I'm so glad you came in my hour.

SANTA—In your hour? So you weren't going to wait for me all night?

DICK—No, Tom tried sitting up all night last year, but he fell asleep and missed you. So we decided this year we would take turns, then one of us would surely catch you. Of course, it's as easy as pie to stay awake for an hour!

SANTA—Just you and Tom?

DICK—Oh, no; Charlotte and Eunice, too.

SANTA—Did you want something special, or just to saw howdie-do?

DICK—Oh, yes; we have some—— But before I forget it, Eunice hid her milk from supper for you, because she thought you might be hungry. [*Runs to cupboard or any other convenient place and gets plate of crackers and child's china mug with picture on it. Gives them to* SANTA CLAUS.]

SANTA—[*Taking them*] Well, bless her little heart for thinking of me! This is the best feast I have had for many a Christmas Eve. [*Sits in arm-chair. Sees picture on mug.*] 'Pon my soul! If this isn't a picture of me in my sleigh driving away on the "night before Christmas." Those are my very own reindeer. There is Prancer, and this one is Dancer——

DICK—[*Leaning against* SANTA'S *knee*] This is Tom's favorite——

SANTA—That's Vixen.

DICK—But I like this little one with his head in the air.

SANTA—That's Blitzen; he is the most fiery. You tell Eunice this is the best milk I ever tasted. It must be her little mug gives a special flavor to it.

DICK—She thought it would make you feel we were old friends, though we hadn't *really* ever met each other. Now I must get the presents. [*Goes to table and gets them.*]

SANTA—What, presents for me! This is truly a night of surprises!

DICK—You've given us so many lovely presents, we wanted to give you some this year. We had quite a time thinking of the things you could use up in the cold country where you live; we hope these will be all right. [*Handing him package*] This is from Tom.

SANTA—[*Unwrapping it*] On my life, a pencil box!

DICK—Tom made it himself at school. It's to hold your pencils. You see, we always make lists of the presents we are going to give, so we thought perhaps you did, too.

SANTA—Lists! I should just think so. I make my lists a yard and a half long each, and my pencils are always rolling away and getting lost in among the toys. It's a mystery to me where they go. I suspect sometimes the animals get hungry and swallow them, thinking they are sassafras sticks. Did you find a pencil stub in that Jack-in-the-box I gave you last year?

DICK—[*Shaking his head*] No. I got the Jack-in-the-box, but there wasn't any pencil in it.

SANTA—That's funny. I thought I dropped it in. But I didn't dare look because every time I opened that box Jack snapped at my finger, and it was getting real sore. I hope he behaved better with you.

DICK—Yes, he has never snapped at me at all.

SANTA—I am mighty glad to hear that.

DICK—[*Giving* SANTA *package, which he opens*] This is from Charlotte. She thought you probably wore mittens, so she made you a mitten tape, like mother makes for us, so we won't lose them. See, you sew a mitten on each end of the tape; then you put it up one sleeve and down the other, and you simply *can't* lose them. She embroidered your name with cross stitch in the middle, so you wouldn't get it mixed up with anybody else's mitten tape.

SANTA [*Reading cross stitch*] S-a-n-t-a—Santa Claus! You tell Charlotte I have lost three pairs of mittens already this winter but I shall never lose another.

DICK—She was sorry she didn't have the mittens so she could sew them on the tape for you.

SANTA—Oh, I can do that. I'm pretty handy with the needle. My sewer sometimes gets sick and I have to do her work. Why I dressed that doll I sent Charlotte last year all myself.

DICK—Did you really? That must be why it was always her favorite. [*Hands him package.*] Then this is from me.

SANTA—Bless my stars, a calendar! Up she goes right under my clock so I can always tell how long I have till Christmas. I almost made a mistake of a day one year because it was leap year and I discovered it just the last minute. Imagine if I had come a night too soon! Why no one would have been ready for me and there would not have been

any stockings to fill. So I vowed I would have a real calendar thereafter and never come so near making *that* mistake again. Did you draw the holly?

DICK—Yes, I made it at school. Here is Eunice's present. She's so little she couldn't really do much, but she picked these everlasting in the country last summer and dipped them in some red dye Mother got for her. She made you the bouquet.

SANTA—[*Looking at it with admiration and then pinning it on his coat*] This is the first bouquet I have had given me since I lived on this earth, and that was fifteen hundred years ago.

DICK—[*Surprised*] Why, did you really ever live on this earth? I never knew that.

SANTA—You didn't? Dear me, you didn't suppose I was always an old man living up among the icebergs, did you?

DICK—Yes. I never thought of your having been young. Were you a little boy once?

SANTA—Of course.

DICK—Where did you live? In America?

SANTA—Oh, no. That was a thousand years before Columbus discovered America. I lived in Patara, a Greek town in Asia Minor, on the Mediterranean Sea. It had been converted to Christianity by the Greek Catholic Church.

DICK—Then how did it happen that you became Santa Claus?

SANTA—That is a little question, but a long story.

DICK—Tell it to me. I love stories.

SANTA—I haven't time for that. But I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll take you back to Patara and you can see it for yourself, while I am going on to other houses.

SANTA—[SANTA CLAUS *climbs out window*, L. B. *stands outside talking in.*] Climb out this window, and you will be in Patara in the fourth century.

DICK—[*Going to window and hesitating*] But will I be able to come back? I shouldn't like to be left all alone back in the fourth century, you know.

SANTA—Oh, yes, just climb in the window again. I'll be here by the time you are.

DICK—Shall I see you in Patara?

SANTA—You will see me as I was when I lived there. But you must not speak to anyone because they belong to a different century and would not understand. You will know me. My name is Nicholas. [SANTA *disappears.* DICK *hesitates a minute, then starts to climb out.*]

Curtain.

ACT 2

SCENE—PATARA *in the fourth century. A curtain is hung from back to front of stage, dividing it into two spaces, the left space being larger than the right. The left is a room in a house, scantily furnished with a table, two Greek couches and some Greek lamps. The right space is a street. A window is cut in the curtain. There is a window in back of street.*

DISCOVERED—CALCHAS *and the three girls are in the room.* CALCHAS *sits with his head bowed, as if worn out and discouraged.* HESTIA *spins with distaff.* LARISSA, *has just entered with a vase of water, which she carries on her head, steadying it with her hand. She pours out a cup of water and gives it to her father during the following scene.* DORIS *sits on the couch, L. B. playing with three colored balls, supposed to be made of leather.*

The window in the street is the outside of that through which Dick climbed at the end of the first act. We now see him climbing out.

DORIS—Father, I am hungry.

CALCHAS—Is there no bread in the cupboard, Larissa?

LARISSA—[*Looking into cupboard*] No, not a crumb.

CALCHAS—Woe unto me! Then is all over.

HESTIA—Oh, do not say that.

CALCHAS—Aye, but it is. To think that I, who was once one of the richest merchants in Patara, should be brought to this. But I could well bear it were it not for you, my daughters.

LARISSA—Isn't there something we can do to earn money?

CALCHAS—Nothing. All that you can do is done by slaves. You are old enough to be married. I know several young men who would make you good husbands, but there is no money for the dowries.

HESTIA—That is so.

LARISSA—And can't a girl ever marry without a dowry?

CALCHAS—'Tis a foolish question, Larissa; of course not.

HESTIA—But be not discouraged; let us still hope.

CALCHAS—Nay, nay, there is no hope. To-morrow we are to be turned out of this house.

DORIS—Then what can we do? We are hungry, father.

CALCHAS—I know not. Driven into the streets, you will have to beg and get your living as best you can.

LARISSA—Beg! Oh, we cannot beg.

CALCHAS—Or I can sell you as slaves. Haemon came to me yesterday, offering to buy you.

HESTIA—Father! The wicked Haemon! Oh never do that. Rather would I do anything than be his slave!

CALCHAS—'Tis better than starving and there is nought else to do.

HESTIA—My flax is gone and my cloth not half spun. Look, Doris, see if there be a bit more to be had for the searching.

DORIS—[*Looking*] No, it is all gone.

HESTIA—Then must I stop.

CALCHAS—Come, let us to bed and pray that God will take pity upon us. [*Father lies down on straw in one corner and girls on couches. Enter in street* NICHOLAS (SANTA CLAUS). *He is now young.* DICK *crouches in corner as he goes by. Enter* PENELOPE, *who is a bent old woman and walks with a cane. She sees* NICHOLAS, *hobbles towards him, takes his hand and, bowing low, covers it with kisses.*]

PENELOPE—St. Nicholas, St. Nicholas, may God bless you!

NICHOLAS—Not saint, my good woman, but just Nicholas, a plain man who but tries to do the will of his Master.

PENELOPE—Aye, that you do, and all the mothers in Christendom bless you for it. Did you not only last week save my boy from——

NICHOLAS—Oh, you are Penelope?

PENELOPE—Yes, Penelope, who has not yet thanked you for——

NICHOLAS—Tut, tut, woman, do not speak of that. But tell me who lives in this miserable hovel. 'Tis not a fit place for human beings.

PENELOPE—Calchas, and his three daughters.

NICHOLAS—What, Calchas, who was so rich a merchant?

PENELOPE—Aye, but he has lost all his riches and rumor has it that to-morrow he must sell his daughters to the wicked Haemon—the Lord have mercy on their souls!—because he has no money for their dowries.

NICHOLAS—And they so fair and good! 'Tis too dreadful to be thought of!

PENELOPE—It is either that or starvation. 'Tis a hard choice.

NICHOLAS—It must not be. [*Gives her coin*] For the information I thank you. Take this for your boy.

[PENELOPE *kisses his hand and bows herself out.* NICHOLAS *looks through the window at the sleeping girls, then takes a purse from his pocket, tosses it through the window and quickly goes off.* DICK *goes to window and watches the following scene.*]

DORIS—[*Waking*] What was that noise?

LARISSA—It sounded as if something dropped.

HESTIA—See, what is that? [*Jumps up. Picks up purse. Girls go to look over her shoulder.*] Oh, it is a purse!

CALCHAS—[*Waking*] What is the matter?

HESTIA—[*Happily*] Oh, father, it is a purse.

LARISSA—It must have come through the window.

DORIS—Or fallen from heaven.

CALCHAS—[*Who has risen*] What is in it?

HESTIA—We do not know.

LARISSA—Open it.

HESTIA—[*Doing so*] Oh, see, it is gold, pure gold!

LARISSA—How it glitters!

DORIS—I said it dropped from heaven.

CALCHAS—'Tis enough for your wedding dowry, Hestia.

[NICHOLAS *has approached and is listening through window.* DICK *crouches behind him.*]

HESTIA—Oh then I will not have to go out in the streets.

LARISSA—Or beg.

DORIS—Or be hungry.

CALCHAS—'Tis the blessed saints who take pity on us! If only I had some way of providing for the other two!

LARISSA—Where could it have come from?

HESTIA—Some Christian soul.

[NICHOLAS *throws in second purse and quickly withdraws.*]

HESTIA—A second purse!

DORIS—[*Running and picking it up*] For Larissa.

LARISSA—Oh, how wonderful!

CALCHAS—Heaven is smiling upon us.

HESTIA—Who can it be who is so kind?

LARISSA—Perchance it was tossed in the window by some priest who has heard of our misfortune.

HESTIA—We must find him. We must at least give him our thanks.

DORIS—But where can we find him?

HESTIA—If he would only come back!

LARISSA—Perchance he will bring a purse for Doris.

CALCHAS—That would be too much. Yet fortune is ofttimes father to hope. I will go watch for him.

LARISSA—Do, and miss him not if he comes back.

[*Exit* CALCHAS. *Appears in a minute in the street; then disappears. Girls sit L.B.*]

HESTIA—Who can it be?

DORIS—They say the good Nicholas does many kind deeds which he tells not of.

[NICHOLAS *appears, throws purse through window and starts to go off but is stopped by the father. The girls with a cry of delight pick up the other purse. They sit on couch, talking, laughing happily and playing with gold.* DORIS *plays with balls.* DICK *keeps himself in the background.*]

CALCHAS—[*Grasping the bottom of* NICHOLAS' *cloak and kissing it, if he wears one, bending low*] At last I have found you, our benefactor. [*Looks at him.*] Ah, it is the good Nicholas! I might have known. It is the holy Nicholas who gives his riches

to the poor and needy. How can we thank you for your infinite goodness?

NICHOLAS—Do not thank me. The gold comes from a fortune that was left to me. There are many whom it can help more than it could me, and I am glad always to find them.

CALCHAS—But think how you have saved my daughters! Come inside that they at least may tell you of their gratitude.

NICHOLAS—Oh, no, no, no. I beg of you, do not let them know who I am. Promise me that.

FATHER—I must promise, since you wish it. But I can not prevent them from guessing. 'Twill not be hard to guess aright, for everywhere is good Nicholas known. See, how happy you have made them! [*Leads* NICHOLAS *to window.*]

[*Girls dance with scarfs. When they stop,* DORIS *again plays with balls.*]

DORIS—Think of it; a few hours ago we were beggar girls, ready to be sold into slavery.

LARISSA—And now we are saved from that and our father from misery.

HESTIA—Blessings on him who has saved us whoever he may be!

NICHOLAS—'Tis pleasant music, the young girls' happy voices. I should like to linger longer to listen to it. But I must go on my way. [*Father takes his hand and kisses it. Exit* NICHOLAS.]

FATHER—[*Looking after him*] Go, go on thy

way, leaving behind thee the memory of thy goodness and above all the love and gratitude of our boys and girls, in whose hearts mayest thou live for generations, thou saint of children!

Curtain.

ACT 3.

SCENE—*Same as Act 1.*

Curtain

DISCOVERED—SANTA CLAUS *climbing in window. He comes in, goes to stockings and starts filling them. There is a noise at the window.* SANTA CLAUS *turns and sees* DICK, *who is trying to open it.*

SANTA—Want to come back to the twentieth century?

DICK—Yes. Will you help me in?

SANTA—All right. [*Helps him in.*]

DICK—[*Looking at* SANTA] You *are* St. Nicholas, aren't you? Your voice is the same and your eyes; but there is so much beard I can't tell about the rest.

SANTA—Of course I am the same. [*Resumes filling stockings.*]

DICK—Did the girls ever find out who tossed the purses in the window?

SANTA—No, but they guessed. They told their friends about it and the story soon spread through the town. Look out the window. It is still the fourth century out there. What do you see?

DICK—[*Going to window*] Why, it is a house like the one Hestia, Larissa, and Doris lived in. There are several children and they find presents, just like we do on Christmas. They are all shouting but I can't understand what they say.

SANTA—Listen.

VOICES—[*Off*] Saint Nicholas sent it! Saint Nicholas sent it!

DICK—Oh, now I hear. They say "Saint Nicholas sent it!" Did you?

SANTA—Perhaps. When I discovered how easy it was to please the children, I used to send them many presents.

DICK—But look, the children have vanished. It is a street now. Who is that old man wearing the black robe like a priest's?

SANTA—He is a bishop of the Greek Catholic Church.

DICK—What pretty white hair! Here come some children. Now they see him and are running towards him. He stops to talk to them and pat their heads. How delighted they are! Why, Santa Claus, it is you!

SANTA—Of course. Who else would it be but the old St. Nicholas? I was an old man then and had not much more time to live on this earth.

DICK—[*Coming back to* SANTA *and peeping in pack*] Then what happened?

SANTA—Why then I used to come back every year on my birthday to make my boys and girls

happy and to fill the hearts of the grown-ups with a love for the children.

DICK—When is your birthday?

SANTA—On the sixth of December. But later I decided that it was too humble a date for such a great celebration so I changed to the birthday of my Master.

DICK—But how do you happen to live now in a country of snow and ice if your home was in Asia Minor when you were on earth?

SANTA—There, all the stockings are filled but yours. But you must not watch me do that, Dick, my boy. Go to the window and you will learn why I choose to live in a country of snow and ice. It is now many years since you saw me as Bishop of Patara.

DICK—What great banks of snow! Oh, what fun it would be to play in them and to make forts and snow-men! This isn't Asia Minor, is it?

SANTA—No, it is Russia.

DICK—Who is the man all the people are listening to?

SANTA—He is a missionary of the Greek Catholic Church.

DICK—It seems to me I hear him say "St. Nicholas."

SANTA—Yes, he is telling them stories about me, from which they will make me their patron saint. [*Finishes stockings and takes up pack.*]

DICK—What is a patron saint?

SANTA—Look again.

DICK—It is a beautiful house,—it looks like a palace in the fairy books. Why is that man in the gorgeous robe kneeling there?

SANTA—He is praying to St. Nicholas, the patron saint of Russia. Look again.

DICK—Oh, what a horrid little house. How poor it looks and how small and dirty. Does anybody live there?

SANTA—Do you see anything in the corner? [SANTA *looks over his shoulder.*]

DICK—Yes, there is an image, and—oh, yes—a man kneeling before it. It is so dark I can hardly see him. Why, the image is St. Nicholas again!

SANTA—That is what it means to be patron saint. From the finest palace to the poorest hovel in Russia the people pray to me and love me. Of course I like to live in a country of ice and snow like the one in which I am most loved.

DICK—[*Who has gone back to the armchair and curled up in it*] But you haven't forgotten the children in the other countries.

SANTA—[*Getting out his mittens and starting to put them on*] Oh, no, indeed. All children are my special care.

DICK—Tell me, St. Nicholas, why do we call you Santa Claus?

SANTA—That is my pet name. The German children gave it to me. The little tots in trying to say

St. Nicholas, which in German is pronounced Sankt Nicolás, said,—but listen, they are outside the window now.

Voices of Children—St. Nicolas—Sant-ni-clas Sant—na—clas—Santa Claus—Santa Claus!

Santa—Try it and you will see how it came. There, the stockings are full and I have already stayed too long. Don't open the stockings till daybreak. [*Goes to window.*]

Dick—No, I won't. You'll be back next year?

Santa—Of course.

Dick—And take me back to the fourth century to see another story?

Santa—Perhaps I'll show you how I saved the lives of the three little boys who were salted and put in a tub.

Dick—Oh goodie!—[*In a relieved voice*] And Santa Claus, I am so glad to have seen you in Patara and to know you once really lived.

Santa—And you have seen, too, how I have lived in Russia and Germany and you know that I still live. Did you ever meet any sour old man or woman who didn't think I was still alive?

Dick—Yes, once; but I didn't believe him.

Santa—That's right, and don't you ever believe him. Of course I am alive and I shall be as long as there are little tots whom I can make happy, and grown-ups whose hearts can thrill at Christmas with the love for little children. Good-night and merry Christmas. [*Starts to climb out window.*]

DICK—[*Very sleepily*] Good night, Merry Christmas, St. Nicolas, Sant-ni-c-las,—Sant-na-claus,—Santa Claus.

Curtain.

IN A VALENTINE BOX

A Play for a Valentine Party

CHARACTERS

Speaking Parts

JOSEY

NURSE

DAN CUPID

PASTE

Valentine Figures

COLONIAL COUPLE

SHEPHERD and SHEPHERDESS

Two or more pairs in Folk Costume,

IRISH, SCOTCH, SWEDISH, SPANISH or JAPANESE

IN A VALENTINE BOX *

COSTUMES—JOSEY—*A nightgown, wrapper and slippers.* NURSE—*Nurse's uniform, made of blue or white dress, with white apron and cap.* CUPID—*Scarlet suit, like a little elf. Have the smallest girl play this part. She should be elfish and impish. She carries quiver and pasteboard arrows.* PASTE—*Cylinder of pasteboard around her from under armpits to knees. It can be fastened together with brass paper fasteners. Around it is painted in black, "PASTE." Hat is made of pasteboard. Fasten whiskbrush on arm, so she can dip it in hat.* SHEPHERD—*Bloomers, blouse, straw hat.* SHEPHERDESS—*Flowered dress, straw hat with streamers, long crook.* COLONIAL BOY—*Colored bloomers, colored stockings, pumps with buckles. Woman's satin coat, worn inside out, to show fancy lining, and lace sewn in sleeves and neck, like ruff.* COLONIAL MAID—*Flowered skirt looped over skirt of solid color; lace bertha, brooch, hair powdered and done high or with one curl over shoulder.* FOLK COUPLES *in conventional costumes.*

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SCENE—*The stage is set to look like the inside of a valentine box. Stuck up on the wall are cupids, large hearts, quivers and other emblems cut out of scarlet cardboard or paper. A few feet of valentine crêpe paper, which comes in rolls, can be used. Bunches or baskets of real or paper flowers may be set about. White cardboard birds, like turtle doves, or stuffed birds are appropriate. Ornaments, suggestive of valentines, can be easily made out of paper such as used to be put on the pantry shelf.*

The decorations may be either elaborate or simple. Only a few hearts and cupids are actually needed.

At right, half way down stage, is a chair. A rustic bench is further back, then a chair, left back, and another chair left front.

As the curtain goes up in Scene II the arrangement is: Sitting, R.F., IRISH GIRL; *standing, behind her,* COLONIAL BOY; *sitting on bench,* SCOTCH GIRL *and* SHEPHERD; *sitting L.B.,* COLONIAL GIRL; *standing by her,* IRISH BOY; *sitting L.F.,* SHEPHERDESS; *standing by her,* SCOTCH BOY; *standing, L.F.,* PASTE.

[*Scotch and Irish couple are used in this version, but other couples may be substituted at pleasure.*]

PROPERTIES—*Bench, armchair, valentine box, pasteboard cupid, blankets.*

The opening scene is outside the valentine

box. If there is a stage, this can take place on the floor below. Either JOSEY *is rolled in in an invalid chair, or else she comes in, helped by nurse, and sits in armchair.*

If there is no stage, this scene takes place before curtain, which should be red if possible.

[*Enter* JOSEY *and* NURSE. NURSE *helps her in or rolls her in chair. Carries valentine box.*]

NURSE—The doctor says you can sit up a whole hour today, Josey? Isn't that fine?

JOSEY—Only an hour! And I'd been thinking that by tomorrow I would surely be well enough to go to Ted's valentine party. Oh, dear!

NURSE—Now don't sigh. I have a fine surprise for you. See what your father brought you from the city last night. [NURSE *holds up box.*]

JOSEY—[*Scornfully*] "The Valentine Box." What is it anyway? A box of valentines?

NURSE—[*Enthusiastically*] Not of valentines, but of flowers and little people and all sorts of the wonderful things that valentines are made of. [*She peeps in and says mysteriously*] I can see little folks dancing in there, a lad and lassie from the bonnie highlands of Scotland, a shepherd and shepherdess and a stately couple of Colonial times.

JOSEY—[*Becoming interested*] Let me see! Let me see!

NURSE—[*Drawing away from her in tantalizing manner*] And flowers and love tokens of many kinds. Here, right on top, is Dan Cupid, the mis-

chievous little scamp, so anxious to get to work he can't wait to be taken out, but must jump to the very top of the box.

JOSEY—Do let me have it; I want a peep into the valentine box, too.

NURSE—[*Handing it to her*] Get Cupid to show you its wonders, and a happy time to you! [*Exit* NURSE.]

[JOSEY *takes box and opens it just a bit so she can peep in.*] JOSEY—Come out, Dan Cupid, come out. [*She gets a pasteboard cupid between her two fingers and almost upsets the box. In trying to catch it, it slips from her hands, and falls with the cupid to the floor between her chair and the curtain.*] There, butter fingers, you've gone and dropped him. [*Calls towards door through which* NURSE *went off*] Nurse! Nurse! [*After a pause*] There, she's gone, too. Well, I'll have to get him myself. [*She takes off blankets in which she is tucked and crawls down behind chair, looking for* CUPID.] Here you are. [*She takes* CUPID, *who has crawled under Curtain, by the ear and pulls him out in front of chair.*] Well, you are a little scamp, just as Nurse said. Now, aren't you sorry to make me get out of those nice, warm blankets for you?

CUPID—[*Who is always saucy.*] No, I am not; not one little single mite. You really don't think those blankets are a bit nice, and you are so tired and sick of being wrapped up so warmly. You are just dying to explore the valentine box.

JOSEY—Of course I am and I am waiting for you to take me.

CUPID—Come on, then. [*Taking* JOSEY *by the hand, he starts to lift the curtain as he would a box lid. The curtain rises or is drawn aside.* CUPID *pushes aside the invalid chair.* JOSEY *stands R.F. The stage represents the inside of a valentine box and the valentine figures are placed as stated in directions above. They are all quarreling together in noiseless pantomime, according to character.*]

JOSEY—What is the matter with them, Dan Cupid?

CUPID—Nothing, except that they are mismated. They are waiting for you and me to come straighten out the tangle.

JOSEY—But could we do it?

CUPID—Could we? Well just wait! [*Runs over and winks to* PASTE] Could we, Paste?

PASTE—Just you help me screw this top off and I'll set them all where they will stay quietly, without pecking at each other like so many angry hens. [*During this speech* CUPID *has pushed* SHEPHERDESS *off her chair, climbed up on it himself and removed* PASTE'S *hat, so she can stick her brush into it.*]

CUPID—Tut, tut! They are not angry. [*With smirking sentimentality, as if making fun of them*] They are as lovesome as turtle-doves! Watch! [*He shoots and hits the* IRISH BOY *and then the* IRISH GIRL *with his arrows. They immediately stop quar-*

reling and begin searching for each other. They look at others in turn, pushing each aside. As they finally see each other, jig music starts, they run together and dance Irish jig, while JOSEY *looks on in admiration. If other characters are substituted for the Irish couple, have appropriate dance. They smile as they dance. On the last bar of the dance the* SCOTCH LASS *begins tugging at the* SHEPHERD, *beating time with her feet, as if wanting him to dance* ***with her.***]

JOSEY—Look at the Scotch lass! She is teasing the poor shepherd boy and he doesn't know what to make of her.

CUPID—She wants to dance, too, but he doesn't know her kind of dance.

JOSEY—Oh, I see her laddie over there. Make them dance.

CUPID—All right. If the Irish couple suit you, get Paste to put them together for a valentine.

JOSEY to PASTE—Yes, do. [PASTE *dips his brush into his hat, which is still on his head, and steps up behind Irish couple. Taking their hands, he pastes them together in several spots, and, when they suit him, draws them back between the chair where* IRISH GIRL *formerly sat and the bench on which* SCOTCH LASS *is. They stand in pose during rest of play. As he is finishing,* CUPID *shoots* SCOTCH LASS *and* LADDIE, *who come together and dance Highland Fling. Music. They smile as they dance.*]

JOSEY—Oh, those two will make a fine valentine

for Dad. He just loved the Scotch Highlanders in the parade. Put them together, Paste, quick! [*An indefinite number of folk dances may be introduced here,* Josey *saying some such introductory line as: "I'd love to see the Swedish couple dance," etc. He takes Scotch couple L.F. As* Paste *goes forward to paste the last couple of folk dancers together,* Cupid *shoots* Shepherdess, *who rises and walks about as if looking for someone.*]

Josey—Little Bo Peep has lost her sheep——

Cupid—But it's not her sheep she is looking for *now.* [*Laughs gleefully. Shoots* Shepherd, *who sits L.F. He rises and draws her to him. If he can pipe, he pipes a few notes. He gathers flowers, which are near bench, and puts them in her hair, under her hat or in her dress. During the following dance he produces some string and they play cat's cradle, making a pretty picture, while* Paste, *standing behind them, pastes them together.*

Josey—But see that pretty little colonial maid all alone over there. I'd like to put her on my valentine for Ted. You see, Ted is going to have a valentine party tomorrow.

Cupid—Well, don't I know it!

Josey—Why, were you invited?

Cupid—Of course; I am guest of honor at all valentine parties. Oh, I'll be there, all right, all right. [*Bobs his head and winks slyly.*]

Josey—Then give me the colonial maid for Ted's valentine.

CUPID—As you say. [*Shoots* COLONIAL BOY *and* GIRL. *Music of minuet. In first four measures he walks to her chair; second four, he bows; third four, she rises and both bow; fourth four, they walk front stage, he holding up her hand. They then do several figures from the minuet, which can easily be done by two people. They smile as they dance.*]

JOSEY—[*As they walk forward to begin dance*] How courtly he is.

CUPID—He is a gallant youth, after the heart of old St. Valentine himself. [*The dance ends with a final courtesy to each other. The last two measures of the music are repeated and they courtesy to the audience.*]

JOSEY—They'll be fine for Ted's valentine! [*Noise outside*] But listen! Here comes nurse and she'll take me back to bed. Quick, let's line up my valentines and see what a lot I have put together. [JOSEY *brings forward* IRISH COUPLE, CUPID *brings* SHEPHERD *and* SHEPHERDESS *and* PASTE *brings* SCOTCH COUPLE. *Order from left to right in semi-circle is:* JOSEY, IRISH COUPLE, SHEPHERD *and* SHEPHERDESS, COLONIAL COUPLE, SCOTCH COUPLE, PASTE.]

JOSEY—I think they'll do; they are really very lovely.

CUPID—[*Who is fixing them, bobs out between* SHEPHERDESS *and* COLONIAL COUPLE *and says gleefully to figures*] Ha! Ha! She says you are lovely! Make your bow to the lady. [*Last two bars of*

minuet. They all bow and courtesy in characteristic style to JOSEY, *and then again with* JOSEY *to the audience.* PASTE *bobs with them. As curtain falls, couples turn and bow to each other, each one bowing to newly found partner.*]

THE LOVE LYRIC OF LETTERS

An Alphabet Farce

CHARACTERS

ELOISE, *the heroine*
HER MOTHER
LEANDER, *the hero*
EBEN, *the villain*
THE POLICEMAN

THE LOVE LYRIC OF LETTERS

This farce may be given at any time, but it is particularly well suited to an April Fool's entertainment.

Throughout the play, only letters are said. Some of them have significance, as I. W. W., N. G., W. C. T. U., PH.D. Others merely furnish means of expression through tone of voice.

As it is a farce, the gestures and the emotion of the voice should be exaggerated. It is well to memorize a few lines of letters; otherwise, it will be found that you naturally fall into reciting the alphabet consecutively and that spoils the effect. Try always to think the words, as you recite the letters. For instance, think the haughty question: "What do you here, villain?" and say, in the tone of voice you would use: "V D G O, B C?" or, "in a voice trembling with pent-up emotion," such as you so often read about in melodramatic books, think: "Darling, I love you; will you be mine?" and say, with hands first pressed to your heart and then outstretched in entreaty: "T C, I V U; V U T B?" After practicing a few sentences, you will soon catch the idea. Almost every time letters meaning something, like G O P or R S V P, are used, they bring a laugh.

Anything can be used as costumes. The more ridiculous they are, the better. There should be two or three rehearsals before the play is given.

The characters are ELOISE, *the heroine; her* MOTHER; LEANDER, *the hero;* EBEN, *the villain; and the* POLICEMAN.

All have cardboards bearing names on backs. They enter, go across the stage, one by one, and bow with back towards the audience.

Act 1

Scene—*Room in* Eloise's *house.* Eloise *sits sewing or knitting. Enter* Leander, *creeping in stealthfully or coming in window. Wears burglar's mask.* Eloise *hears him, turns, sees him and screams.*

Leander—[*Putting finger to lips and speaking entreatingly*] O. D! O. D!

Eloise—[*Surprised*] I. W. W.?

Leander—[*Reassuringly*] I.W.W. [*Unmasks*]

Eloise—V U S G?

Leander—[*Pointing to window*] T S P C.

[*Noise. Voices outside*]

Eloise *fearfully points to place whence voices come.* Leander *looks about for place to hide. Conversation ad lib. After trying one or two places,* Eloise *puts together two chairs.* Leander *crouches behind them.* Eloise *sits and resumes sewing.*

[*Enter* Mother, *followed by* Eben.]

Mother—[*Introducing* Eben *to* Eloise, *with an air of importance as if impressed by titles*] Eloise —A. B. A. M. PH.D. D.D. L.L.D.

Eben—[*Graciously*] B U T, S C, L I. [*Aside and rapturously*] O. K.!

Eloise—[*Coldly*] B U M. [*Aside, scornfully*] N. G.!

[*Exit* MOTHER, *well pleased.* EBEN *asks if he may sit down.* ELOISE *assents. He goes for chair.*]

ELOISE—[*Jumping up excitedly and stopping him*] *D U B S. V S G. etc.* [*Goes to get chair for him. He insists on getting it. Talks. Tries to stop her, she tries to stop him. Both talk. She stands in front of chair trying to keep him off, but he has his hand on it. In their efforts to get it, they knock it over.* LEANDER *appears.*]

EBEN—[*Jumping back in amazement*] D S B W?

ELOISE—[*Getting between them and introducing*] A. B. A. M. PH.D. D.D. L.L.D.—— I. W. W.

LEANDER—[*Disgusted*] Q. C.

EBEN—[*Scornfully*] W. C. T. U. [*Turning to* ELOISE] F U G N A K S T R B * *

LEANDER—[*To* ELOISE] M J H H F S T H S N * * * * *

[ELOISE *turns her back upon* EBEN *and listens to* LEANDER. EBEN, *after several attempts to attract her attention for more than a moment, decides to go. He tells her so, offering his hand. She shakes hands with him coldly.*]

EBEN—[*Angrily to* LEANDER] S. P. C. A.

LEANDER—[*Ditto*] Ph.D.

[EBEN *goes out, but in a few minutes returns and listens.*]

LEANDER—[*Passionately*] O, L O O? L, V U T U G H. I. L. U. I. L. U. R. S. V. P. O. L., R. S. V. P. R. S. V. P.

ELOISE—[*Pointing to herself*] F. F. V. To him: I. W. W.

LEANDER—U, D. A. R. I, I. O. O. F. U, W. C. T. U. I, S. P. C. A. U. C.?

EBEN—[*Aside*] S. P. U. G.

LEANDER—[*Imploring*] B U P, T B F, V E L S, C M M P. I. L. U. R. S. V. P. R. S. V. P.

[ELOISE *shows signs of yielding.* LEANDER *recites dramatically and fervently.*] U R M P. I B Y T. U C I D. R S V P.

[*Enter* MOTHER. *Goes between them. Takes* ELOISE *by her arm and points wrathfully to door.*]

MOTHER—[*Angrily*] G. O. G. O. G H F B, K K S. N X W Q, V T U B. U. C. U. C. U. C. G. O. G. O. U. C. V. I. Z. [*To* LEANDER] U,—I B I D.

[EXIT ELOISE, *weeping.* LEANDER *attempts to follow her, but* EBEN *stops him. A quarrel ensues. They call each other names and threaten each other. The mother, much excited, tries to keep them apart, calling for help.*]

EBEN—Y. M. C. A. U S. P. C. A.: U Y. P. C. A.: U I. W. W., etc., etc.

LEANDER—U D. D. U Ph.D. U LL.D. U D D D D Ph., etc., etc.

MOTHER—S. O. S. S. O. S. W. C. T. U. W. C. T. U. S. O. S. S. O. S.

Curtain.

Act 2

Scene—*Outside of* Eloise's *house. A step ladder is there to represent a balcony. Over it a cloth is hung. Behind it* Eloise *is concealed. Enter* Leander, *playing a guitar.*

Leander—[*Singing*]

O L, V U T D
I C, M L T B,
M Y, I B N G,
T P, O K U B.
O.L.; O.L.; H D F E. I V U D.

Eloise *appears.*

Leander—U., O. U., I. C.

[*Then follows a passionate love scene in which* Leander *finally persuades* Eloise *to climb down from the balcony and elope with him.* Eloise *retires for her shawl! She comes back.*]

Leander—[*Calls to her*] P. D. Q.! P. D. Q.! P. D. Q.!

[*She leans over the balcony, and then leaps into his arms. There is a long and touching embrace. Enter* Eben. *He creeps up from the back, parts the two.*]

Eben—Y. M. C. A. G. O.

Leander—M. I. T.

EBEN—W. P. I.

LEANDER—[*Drawing out sword*] D. I.

[EBEN *takes out sword. They fight, calling each other names all the time.* ELOISE *flies about tearing her hair.*]

ELOISE—D. A. R. Y. M. C. A. G. O. P., etc. etc.

[LEANDER *finally overthrows* EBEN. *He seizes the fainting* ELOISE *and brings her to.*]

[*Enter* MOTHER, *sees the situation, is much excited. Leans over* EBEN's *body, weeping, and speaking to him tragically:*] A. M. PH.D., etc. [*Rises and glares at* LEANDER. *Shakes her fist accusingly and speaks threateningly*] I. W. W. V U D G? S L A, etc. [*Tears off stage, still threatening.*]

LEANDER—[*Looking at body and speaking solemnly*] Q. E. D.

ELOISE—[*Who has come to, urges him to flee*] B S P T, etc.

[*He yields, takes a last hurried farewell, and is going off, pushed by* ELOISE, *when* MOTHER *and* POLICEMAN *enter.*]

[MOTHER *points violently to* LEANDER.]

MOTHER—D V B V., etc.

ELOISE—[*Screaming*] C. O. P. C. O. P.

LEANDER [*echoes*] C. O. P.

COP—[*Looking at body and speaking savagely to* LEANDER]—Z U X Y?

ELOISE—[*Throwing herself between* LEANDER *and* COP, *and picking up bloody sword and brandishing it*] I! I! I!

LEANDER—[*Casting her aside and smiting his chest bravely*] U. O. K. B. I.! B. I.!

COP—[*Taking* LEANDER *by the collar and leading him away from the clinging* ELOISE] J. A. I. L.! J. A. I. L.!

MOTHER—[*Seizing* ELOISE *by the arm and pulling her away, talks first crossly to her, then pathetically, looking at body.* ELOISE *has eyes only for the lover who is being dragged from the stage.*]

Curtain.

Act 3

Scene—*Prison. A kitchen chair is on a table.* Leander *kneels on table. Looks desperately through bars, shaking them and groaning.*

Leander—O. D. O. D. T. R. T. R. G. O. P., etc., etc.

[*Enter* Cop. *Goes to* Leander *and speaks to him roughly.*]

Leander—[*Entreating*] C. O. P. C. O. P.

[Cop *speaks crossly to him, pushing crust of bread through the bars.* Leander *seizes it eagerly. Eats it.* Cop *starts to go off.*]

Leander—[*Again entreating*] C. O. P.! C. O. P.!

Cop—[*Coldly*] C. O. D.

[Cop *sits in chair near prison.* Leander *still beseeches him, but he pays no attention. Goes to sleep and soon is snoring. Enter* Eloise *stealthily. Sees* Cop, *and retreats. Creeps up silently to* Leander. Leander, *putting arms through bars, calls to her.*]

Leander—O. L. O. L.

[Eloise *goes to him, weeps. He seizes her hands and kisses them through the bars. Conversation ad lib. She wants him to escape. He shakes the bars.*]

ELOISE—F. L. E. E. F. L. E. E.

LEANDER—F. L. E. E.? B. & M.

ELOISE—B & M—N. G. N. Y., N. H. & H.—O. K.

[*Animated conversation. Finally* LEANDER *seizes the rounds of the chair desperately, pulls them out, throws them to left and to right, jumps off the table, apparently through chair, takes* ELOISE *in his arms and escapes.* COP *continues to snore. After a pause,* COP *slowly awakens. Goes to chair, looks sleepily for* LEANDER. *Not seeing him, does not understand. Rubs his eyes. Then says tragically:* G. O. N. E.! G. O. N. E.! *Goes to door and calls:* W. C. T. U. W. C. T. U. *Enter* MOTHER, *excited.* COP *points to prison, saying:* G. O. N. E.!]

MOTHER—[*Incredulously*] G. O. N. E.?

COP—G. O. N. E.

MOTHER—N. O. P. S.?

COP—N. O. P. S. [MOTHER *faints into* COP'S *arms.* COP *holds her helplessly, calling*] S. O. S. S. O. S.

Curtain

JACK-I'-THE-GREEN

CHARACTERS

The Maiden Who Greets the Dawn
Joan
Johnny
Harry
Little Bettee
Other Girls and Boys
Nick
Dick
Other Chimney Sweeps
Madge
Other Milkmaids
The Fiddler

JACK-I'-THE-GREEN

TIME—*The Seventeenth Century.*

PLACE—*England.*

SCENE—*A green in the outskirts of a city. In the center is a May-pole, at the back a throne, on the sides a few rustic benches.*

[*A maiden dances on to greet the May Day dawn. The dance may be as elaborate or as simple as desired. She then recites* MILTON'S *"Song on May Morning."*]

THE MAIDEN

Now the bright morning star, Day's harbinger,
Comes dancing from the east, and leads with her
The flowery May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose.
Hail, bounteous May, that dost inspire
Mirth and youth and warm desire;
Woods and groves are of thy dressing,
Hill and dale doth boast thy blessing.
Thus we salute thee with our early song,
And welcome thee, and wish thee long.

[*She dances off.*]

[*Girls and boys run in, dancing and singing. The* FIDDLER, *dressed as an old man, comes with them, playing his fiddle.*]

Song—[*See* Producing Suggestions *at end of text.*]

In summer time, when flow'rs do spring,
And birds sit on each tree,
Let Lords and Knights say what they will,
There's none so merry as we.
There's Will and Moll, with Harry and Doll
And Tom and bonny Bettee,
Oh! how they do jerk it, caper and firk it,
Under the Greenwood tree.
In summer time, etc.

Come, play us Adam and Eve, says Dick;
What's that? says little Pipe:
The Beginning of the World, quoth Nick,
For we are dancing-ripe;
Is't that you call? then have it all;
He play'd with merry glee;
O, then did we skip it, caper and trip it,
Under the Greenwood tree.
In summer time, etc.

Joan

Around the May-pole let us dance and sing
Until the earth and sky with laughter ring,
And echo back the message of the day,—
That it is summer and the first of May!
But wait—where are the chimney sweeps?

All

Yes, where?

JOHNNY

They'll come. A holiday for them is rare;
It is the special day in all the year——

BETTEE [*running forward*]

Listen, they are coming! Hark! O, hear!
[*Noise outside. All run to meet sweeps.*]

ALL

The chimney sweeps are here! They're here!
They're here!

[*Enter sweeps, dressed in rags and covered with soot. They pound on their shovels with their brushes.* NICK *leads them. Boys and girls join hands around them, escorting them in, singing and dancing.*]

SONG

"First and second and third of May
Are chimney sweepers' dancing days
Oh, come and see our garlands gay,
Because it is the May Day.

CHORUS

The first of May is garland day,
And chimney sweepers' dancing day;
So curl your locks as I do mine
With one before and one behind."

DICK

What fun it is to sing and dance and play,
With not a chimney to be swept all day,
And nought to do but romp upon the green!

NICK

But you are dressed in festive clothes and clean,
While we have nought to wear but these old tags,
Those sooty, smeary, smudgy, smutty rags.

JOAN

But where are then our ribbons and our laces?
We'll cover you with them till just your faces
Will peek through 'neath the finery you will don.
We have it ready. Quick! Come, put it on.

JOHNNY

A lady we must have, a lord and fool,
And leading the procession one to rule
A King o'er all, a merry Jack-i'-the-Green,
To walk in glory such as ne'er was seen.

DICK

But who will choose him?

JOAN

'Tis for you to do.
Choose whom you will to rule o'er us and you.

DICK

Why, I for my part, if I had the pick,
Would say there's just one Jack for me—that's Nick!

ANOTHER

If you choose him, you speak for me, too, Dick.

ANOTHER

And me.

ANOTHER

And me.

ANOTHER

And me.

ANOTHER

We all choose Nick.

JOHNNY

Then he shall be our merry Jack-i'-the-Green.

[*All dance around* NICK]

ALL

Hoorah! Hoorah! Long live our Jack-i'-the-Green!

JOAN

A splendid Jack-i'-the-Green, you'll make us, Nick.

JOHNNY

We have the green all ready. Come, be quick!

[*Exeunt dancing and singing: "First of May is garland day."*]

[*Enter milkmaids, dressed in short dresses, caps and aprons. They carry milking pails or stools in one hand and have other on hip. They enter in single file with this step: Three running steps forward, point front, point back, three steps, beginning with other foot, etc. They sing*]

SONG

May is come, we spy the traces
Of her fingers in the flowers,

Boys and girls with smiling faces
Come and seek her through the bowers.
Catch young May,
Oh, make her stay,
And dance around her bright and gay.
[*Repeat last three lines.*]
[*A folk dance may be put in here.*]

First Milkmaid

I wish that we might catch the First of May
And as the song says, make her always stay,
And so the milkmaids' holiday prolong
Till life were nought but merriment and song!

Second Milkmaid

And yet there's some do call the First of May
The sweepers' not the milkmaids' holiday.

Third Milkmaid [*hotly*]

'Tis false, 'tis false, for all do know 'tis ours,
Our one day in the year, this day of flowers!

Madge

To give the sweeps a share would you be loath?
Tush! Sure the day is big enough for both.

First Milkmaid

You're right, sweet Madge, and we do ill to waste
Our precious moments thus. So come, make haste
And let us bathe our faces in the dew;
For oft have we been told how it is true
That dew of May Day has the magic power
To give us beauty from the May Day flower.

SECOND MILKMAID

Oh, let us go and seek the wondrous dew.
'Twill make us fair of face the whole year through.

[*They dance off singing "May is come," etc.* MADGE, *the last, spies a little hat one of the children has dropped. She stops, picks it up, looks at it wistfully, goes back to bench and sits.*]

MADGE

Oh, little cap, whose every crease and fold
E'en still the shape of some small head does hold,
My brother's you might easily be.
He must be grown by now—oh, let me see—
How big? How big?

[*Harry enters, looking for his cap. He sees* MADGE *with it.*]

HARRY

Oh, there it is, how glad
I am you found it. 'Twould be passing sad
If I should lose my bonnie cap to-day,
Which I did wear in honor of the May.

[*She gives him cap.*]

HARRY

You are not merry, you a milkmaid, too.
Why are you not out bathing in the dew?

MADGE

Your little cap has brought unto my mind
The brother I so loved but ne'er will find.

HARRY

And did you lose him?

MADGE

Yes.

HARRY

How long ago?

MADGE

It is two years, or three, since I did know
Where was my little brother, who, a child,
Was stolen by a band of gypsies wild.

HARRY

Did you look for him?

MADGE

Yes, everywhere.
But they, the crafty wretches, took good care
To cover up their traces. I have made
My search in every wood and lonely glade
And cave where wandering gypsies might abide,
The better to their stolen children hide.
I've travelled o'er this land from east to west,
From north to south, but vain has been my quest.

HARRY

Your father and your mother?

MADGE

We had none.
We were alone. But you stay long here—run
To join the lads and lassies in their play,
Or they may think you, too, are stolen away.

HARRY

Oh, do not fear. I'll very careful be
To see the wandering gypsies don't catch me.

MADGE

So thought my brother, never knowing fear.

HARRY

I wish I had the power to bring him here!

[*Exit.*]

[MADGE *stoops, picks a flower, and sings, looking at it.*]

SONG

At night, by moonlight, on the plain,
With rapture how I've seen,
Attended by her harmless train,
The little fairy queen
Her midnight revels sweetly keep;
While mortals are involv'd in sleep,
They trip it o'er the green.

But where they danc'd their cheerful round,
The morning would disclose,
For where their nimble feet do bound
Each flow'r unbidden grows:
The daisy, fair as maids in May,
The cowslip in his gold array,
And blushing violet, 'rose.

[*Enter procession of boys and girls, headed by sweeps.* NICK, *as* JACK-I'-THE-GREEN, *leads. He*

is inside the "green," a cone made of wicker and covered with green boughs and flowers. He wears a crown of green. His face is almost hidden. The other sweeps are decked out fantastically in ribbons and laces and old finery. The procession contains: A "Lady," carrying a ladle; a "Lord" with a frying-pan; a "Fool," the most fantastically dressed, with a bladder on a string, wherewith to belabor the children; two or three with money-boxes; one with a shovel and poker, which he uses as musical instruments. Enter milkmaids.]

JOHNNY

You make a monstrous splendid Jack-i'-the-Green;
A procession half so gorgeous ne'er was seen.

JOAN

For you we'll dance around the May-pole gay.

BETTEE

But Joan, you have forgot the Queen o' the May.

ALL

Oh, yes; oh, yes; let's choose a Queen o' the May!

JOAN

How shall we choose her? Each of us might say
Whom we think best and fairest. Thus 'tis seen
The favorite maiden will be chosen Queen.

JOHNNY

'Tis fun to give the lassies lots to draw,
The Queen is she who pulls the longest straw.

BETTEE

Oh, let us leave it to our Jack-i'-the-Green
To choose the fairest maid to be May Queen!

ANOTHER

Oh, yes; he shall be judge, our Jack-i'-the-Green.

ANOTHER

Oh, what a joke, for Jack to choose the Queen!
[*They dance about him shouting in glee.*]

NICK

If I, your Jack, within the ivy cone,
Must be your judge, then lead me to the throne.
[*With mock solemnity they lead him to the throne.*]
To choose the fairest do I truly vow.
Now pass before, each one, and make your bow.
[*Music. Girls come before him, one by one, and courtesy. Boys and sweeps group around the throne.* HARRY *holds crown.* NICK *looks solemnly at each.*]

NICK

Are not the bonny milkmaids in the game?
I must see all before the best I name.

JOHNNY

Oh, yes; a milkmaid may be chosen Queen.
[*Turns to milkmaids, who have been watching.*]
Come, make your bows before our JACK-I'-THE-GREEN.
[*Milkmaids pass before him and bow.* MADGE

has been sitting aside, lost in thought, and paying no attention to the others.]

NICK

Who is she sitting yonder all alone?
Will she not make her bow before the throne?

BETTEE [*running to her*]

Come, bow before our bonny Jack-i'-the-Green.
Perchance, he'll choose you out to be our Queen.

MADGE

I thank thee, little lass, but must say nay;
I'm in no mood to be your Queen to-day.

NICK [*calling*]

Come, maiden fair, for Queen come take your chance,
To win whose pleasure all will sing and dance.

MADGE [*rising and staggering toward him, arms outstretched*]

That voice! That voice! How can I be mistook!
Oh, give me at thy gentle face one look!

NICK

Thou art the fairest maiden, sad or gay,
I e'er did see. [*Taking crown and crowning her*]
I crown thee Queen of the May.
What is thy name?

MADGE

Madge, Madge, and thine?

NICK

Then tell me it is thou, Oh, sister mine!
[NICK *tears green from his face.*]

MADGE

'Tis thou, if these my eyes aright do see.
[*Takes him in her arms.*]
My brother, and a sweep,—how can it be?

NICK

Nought have I done since I was stol'n away
But chimneys scrape and sweep each livelong day.

MADGE

Then tell me—no, 'twere pity so to blight
This happy season by your tales of fright
And misery past. Let's call on joy instead!
Joy reigns o'er all to-day and grief is dead!

NICK [*leading her to throne*]

This verdant throne, let your fair grace enhance.
Before us will the lads and lassies dance.
And ne'er was May Queen half so fair to see
As thou, lost sister, given again to me.

[*To boys and girls*]

Joy reigns upon your throne in Jack-i'-the-Green,
And joy and beauty blent in your May Queen.
[MADGE *sits on throne.* NICK *stands by her holding her hand. All sing.*]

SONG

1. You lasses and lads, take leave of your dads
And away to May-pole hie,
There every he has got him a she,
And the fiddler standing by.
For Willy has got his Gill,
And Johnny has his Joan,
To jig it, jig it, jig it, jig it,
Jig it up and down.

2. Strike up, says Wat,—agreed, says Matt,
[*To Fiddler.*] And I prithee, fiddler, play;
Content, says Hodge, and so says Madge,
For this is a holiday.
[*Act out.*] Then every lad does doff
His hat unto his lass,
[*Act out. Curtsy 3 or 4 times.*] And every girl does curtsy, curtsy,
Curtsy on the grass.

[*They dance around the May-pole. Any number of dances may be introduced here. These dances may be as elaborate or as simple as desired. At the end they sing the third verse and dance off, Madge and Nick going with them. At the exit stands the Fiddler, holding out cap, into which the children drop twopences as they pass.*]

3. Now here we will stay the whole of
the day,
And tire the fiddler quite,
With dancing and play, without
any pay,
From morning until night.
We'll tell the fiddler then,
We'll pay him for his play,
And each a twopence, twopence,
twopence,
Give him and go away.

Producing Suggestions

This play can be given by a cast composed entirely of girls. Some of them should dress as boys in the quaint costume of England some fifty or one hundred years ago. Look up the Kate Greenaway pictures for suggestions. The costumes are very simple: bloomers, white blouses, windsor ties and caps for the boys. A lace bertha or a hat with streamers worn with short dresses will give a touch of quaintness to the girls' dresses.

All the songs are taken from "Old English Popular Music," by William Chappell, Vol. 2 (revised edition), published by Novello, Ewer & Co., New York. Tunes from the same book are suggested for the two old songs to which the original music has not been preserved.

Song.	*Tune.*	*Page.*
"In Summer time"	"Oh, how they frisk it"	53
"First and second"	Nancy Dawson	168
"May is come"	Lilli burlero	58
"At night, by moonlight"	"There lives a lass"	160
"You lassies and lads"	"Come lassies and lads"	114

THE POTENTATE OF WEATHERDOM

A May Day Play

CHARACTERS

MOLLY

POLLY

THE WEATHER MAN

Weather Sprites:—

PITTER, PATTER } *Showers*

BREEZY, SNEEZY } *Breezes*

MUGGY, PUGGY } *Dog Days*

SHIMMER, GLIMMER } *Sunbeams*

JACK FROST

SNOW FLAKE

RAINBOW

While this play is cast for only two of each type of weather sprites, the number may be increased indefinitely if a larger cast is desired. For instance, with Pitter and Patter still in the speaking parts, there can be four or a whole chorus of Showers, who threaten the Pole and play about as described. The same is true of Sunbeams and Dog Days.

THE POTENTATE OF WEATHERDOM

TIME—*Late afternoon on April 30th.*

SCENE—*An open green with a May Pole in the center. To the left front, a throne.*

[*Enter* MOLLY *and* POLLY. POLLY *has a newspaper tucked under her arm and the girls are looking up into the sky.*]

MOLLY—[*Anxiously*]—Oh, Polly, I do think it is going to rain to-morrow.

POLLY—I am afraid so, too. Look at that big, black cloud over there, scowling down at us.

MOLLY—What does the weather man say?

POLLY—Wait a minute and I'll look. [*They go to throne and sit on steps, looking at paper.*]

MOLLY—There it is.

POLLY—Weather unsettled; showers threatening.

MOLLY—Disagreeable old weather man!

POLLY—If every other day in May were fair, he'd manage to have it rain on the first.

MOLLY—Yes, remember last year; it poured cats and dogs all day.

POLLY—And the years before; remember how the sun came out for a few minutes and we started the dance——

MOLLY—And just in the middle of the dance it began to rain.

POLLY—Everybody got wet.

MOLLY—All the color in my pink scarf ran over my dress till I looked as though I had been dipped into a bottle of red ink.

POLLY—You looked more as though your clothes had caught the measles. Well, it's going to rain to-morrow, so you might as well make up your mind to it now.

MOLLY—[*Looking at pole*]—And the May-pole looks so pretty!

POLLY—It will be a different sight by to-morrow. My, but I'd like to catch that weather-man!

[*Enter* PITTER *and* PATTER. *They run, pattering, up to May-pole and dance about it in delight, with short quick steps.*]

MOLLY—Look, who are they?

POLLY—Aren't they funny looking little creatures? [*They watch showers*]

PITTER—[*On right of May-pole, pulling the ribbons playfully*]—Won't we have fun, Patter? I can't wait until to-morrow.

PATTER—Yes, Pitter, I chose to be the one to make the ribbons run.

PITTER—Let's wait until everyone is there, sitting on the grass, before we come in, and then make them scamper away in a jiffy.

PATTER—I can just see them now, rushing off to the house. [*They take hold of hands and whirl around together. Enter* WEATHER MAN, *picks up paper without seeing* MOLLY *and* POLLY, *who have*

stepped back from throne and are peeping at showers.]

WEATHER MAN—[*Reading*] "Threatening showers." Pretty good guess, when they didn't consult me about it.

MOLLY—[*Who has heard him and goes to right of him, looking up in his face*] Why should they consult you?

POLLY—[*At left, same business*] I thought no one knew anything about the weather but the Weather Man.

WEATHER MAN—But I am the Weather Man.

POLLY—Not really!

WEATHER MAN—Yes, really.

MOLLY—Oh, I'm so glad! Then you can change the weather for to-morrow.

WEATHER MAN—What's the matter with the weather? Doesn't it suit you?

MOLLY—Why, there are showers threatening.

WEATHER MAN—[*Looking at* PITTER *and* PATTER] That's so; they are.

POLLY—Who are?

WEATHER MAN—The showers. See them over there? [SHOWERS *shake fists threateningly at Maypole.*]

POLLY—They certainly do look threatening.

MOLLY—Oh, do send them away. Please, send them away.

WEATHER MAN—I will if I can catch them. But

they come and go so quickly it is pretty hard. They are April showers.

POLLY—Then it is time they went away. It will be May to-morrow.

WEATHER MAN—But they haven't much sense about staying too long; sometimes they hang on until almost June. [*Calling*] Here, Pitter! Here, Patter!

[PITTER *and* PATTER *peep around Pole, see* WEATHER MAN, *make faces and go leaping off stage.*]

WEATHER MAN—Did you ever see such disobedient workers? Not even I, the grand Potentate of Weatherdom can control them. I can't catch them and hold them long enough to punish them.

MOLLY—[*Discouraged*] Then it's hopeless! They will come back and spoil the dance.

POLLY—Isn't there anything you can do?

WEATHER MAN—I'll call my other workers. They are more obedient. [*Whistles.* BREEZY *comes dancing on. She dances lightly about* POLLY *and* MOLLY. *She is followed in a minute by* SNEEZY. *They are light-footed and airy.*]

POLLY—Who is that?

WEATHER MAN—It is Breezy, my messenger. Breezy, summon the weather force. I want to have Pitter and Patter driven away.

[SNEEZY *has danced to the girls and blows upon them on their bare necks, etc., making them sneeze.* BREEZY *dances off.*]

POLLY—Cachew! Who is that?

WEATHER MAN—It is Sneezy. She always follows in the train of Breezy and makes you sneeze. Bundle up tight and drive her away before she is joined by Cold-in-the-Head, who is a disagreeable beast.

[*Enter* JACK FROST, *who is very weak and feeble. He can hardly drag himself along. Holding to him is the* SNOW-FLAKE. JACK *goes to throne and sinks, exhausted, upon the stage. Exit* SNEEZY *as girls bundle up.*]

WEATHER MAN—Well, Jack Frost, you don't look as though you could give me much help in driving away Pitter and Patter.

JACK—Indeed I can't, master; I am so weak that I can hardly keep up at all. If I were still as strong and frisky as in the winter, I could freeze those naughty little showers so stiff that they would not be able to move. Or I could turn them into snow squalls.

WEATHER MAN—Who is that with you? It looks like a snow flake.

JACK—So it is.

WEATHER MAN—But how does she happen to be still alive?

JACK—I found her in a crevice deep in a cavern, where she still lived, although many of her sisters were melting. She begged me to take her to the top of a high mountain, where I am planning to spend the summer months in my palace on the peak.

SNOW-FLAKE—[*Weakly*] Yes, you said you would take me there, but if we don't start on soon, I'll melt on the way.

JACK—May I go, master?

POLLY—Do let him go.

MOLLY—It would be dreadful if she should melt on the way.

WEATHER MAN—Yes, you are of no use to me now.

[JACK *and* SNOW-FLAKE *go off slowly as* MUGGY *and* PUGGY *enter, jumping about and barking.*]

WEATHER MAN—Hello, Muggy. How are you?

MUGGY—Happy, so happy! My day is coming!

PUGGY—Every dog has his day, and ours will soon be here.

MOLLY—Who are they?

WEATHER MAN—They are the dog days.

POLLY—I like the funny little one with the turned-up nose.

WEATHER MAN—He's Puggy. Come here, Puggy. Come here, Muggy. What can you do to keep away the showers?

MUGGY—We can do lots, if it is hot enough. We can hold off the showers for days at a time.

PUGGY—Yes, we chain them in the air until the atmosphere is full of them. They can't get loose and come down to earth while we are the watch dogs.

MOLLY—That would do all right.

POLLY—We won't mind mugginess, so long as it doesn't really rain.

WEATHER MAN—Then it's settled.

MUGGY—Oh, but it has to be hot.

MOLLY—Does it?

PUGGY—[*Barking a trifle savagely*] Of course, stupid! Who ever heard of a dog day being cold?

MUGGY—Did you ever know me to be growling around when the thermometer was below eighty?

POLLY—How high is it now?

MUGGY—Don't know.

PUGGY—Let's look. [*Takes* WEATHER MAN *by coat tails and turns his back to throne.* PUGGY *and* MUGGY *climb on throne and read thermometer on his back.*]

MOLLY—What does it say?

MUGGY—Sixty-one. Twenty degrees too low for me.

PUGGY—You'll have to climb up quicker than that, old Mr. Quicksilver, if you expect us dogs to stay around. [*Both jump down from throne and trot, barking and leaping, off stage.*]

MOLLY—Oh, dear, there does not seem to be a thing we can do. [*Enter* BREEZY *beckoning to some one behind her.*]

WEATHER MAN—Wait. See whom Breezy is bringing now. [GLIMMER *and* SHIMMER *dance on. Their dance may be quite elaborate as they go in and out among the ribbons of the pole playing with them. They also dance about* MOLLY *and* POLLY, *who play with them in wonder and delight.*]

MOLLY—Aren't they beautiful?

POLLY—Who are they, Mr. Weather Man?

WEATHER MAN—The Sunbeams. This is Shimmer. [SHIMMER *courtesies.*] And this is Glimmer. [GLIMMER *courtesies.*]

MOLLY—They are just the ones to drive away the showers.

GLIMMER—Yes, if we are strong enough; but we have been kept in hiding so much that I am not sure that we can help you.

POLLY—Won't you please try? We'll do anything in the world for you if you will.

SHIMMER—Will you let me dance around the May-pole?

MOLLY—Yes, indeed. It never looks so pretty as when you are there.

GLIMMER—But I mean in and out, like this—[*Dancing*]—the way human children do.

POLLY—Why, yes. We'll teach you how.

MOLLY—But we must have more than four.

WEATHER MAN—Wait. I'll call the rest of the weather sprites. [*Whistles; all come on, dancing and leaping in character. Pick up the ribbons.*]

MOLLY—But we have no queen and a May dance is not right before an empty throne.

WEATHER MAN—One of you can be the queen.

POLLY—Oh, no, we must teach them the dance.

MOLLY—[*Who has discovered* SHOWERS *at right of pole and is trying to drive them off.*] Here, go away, you Showers. You will get us all wet.

PITTER—Oh, no, we won't. We are just threatening now.

PATTER—And we'd love really to dance around the pole.

POLLY—But you can't.

PITTER—Please let us.

MOLLY—No.

POLLY—[*Running forward*] Wait a minute. Will you promise to go away to-morrow if we let you play with the Sunbeams now?

PITTER—[*Holding up right hand solemnly*]—By yon gray cloud, I swear.

PATTER—I promise by the showers of May days past.

MOLLY—[*To the* WEATHER MAN] Will they keep their word?

WEATHER MAN—Yes, you can trust them. They are mischievous, but they are honest.

MOLLY—All right, then. Now let's start the dance. [*All pick up ribbons.* SUNBEAMS *and* SHOWERS *are opposite each other. As they start,* RAINBOW *dances on. Dance of the* RAINBOW. *All watch.*]

POLLY—[*As she stops*] Who are you? [SUNBEAMS *and* SHOWERS *dance around her.*]

RAINBOW—I am the rainbow. I saw the raindrops and the sunbeams dancing and when they play together, I always come.

POLLY—You are beautiful enough to be the May Queen.

MOLLY—Come, mount the throne. [*She mounts*

the throne, with the SUNBEAMS *and* SHOWERS *dancing about her as an escort.* WEATHER MAN *stands behind her. Others return to pole and do May-pole dance. Other dances may be introduced at pleasure. At the close, all dance off together, the* RAINBOW *again surrounded by her escort.* WEATHER MAN *brings up the rear.*]

PRODUCING SUGGESTIONS

The play may be given quite simply in any yard, the porch of a house being used by the audience.

The dances may be as simple or as elaborate as desired. Any number may be introduced at the close when all dance around the May-pole before the Rainbow Queen.

All the costumes may be very simple, yet they should be suggestive of the Weather Sprites for which they stand.

The Weather Man is tall and skinny; he wears a duster and a tall silk hat; on his back is fastened a huge thermometer. The Showers wear grey bloomer suits, or pajamas. The Breezes have flowing garments; thin scarfs over white dresses could be used. The Dog Days wear any color that is seen in the color of a dog; the effect will be given if their little round faces look out of tight caps, with stand-up ears. The Sunbeams wear bright yellow dresses, or yellow scarfs over white dresses. Jack Frost has a regular Jack Frost costume, which can be made

of white cotton or flannel, a pointed white cap, and artificial snow. Snow Flake has a fluffy white dress, or fairy costume, sprinkled with artificial snow. Rainbow has a dress of all colors. This could be made by placing long strips of colored paper in the right order over a white dress, hanging loose from the waist, etc., or rainbow scarfs could be used over a white dress.

'NEATH THE SCEPTER OF SUSAN

CHARACTERS

The Senior Class of Merrybrook Female Seminary
- Susan Virginia Jones, *a young lady of radical ideas*
- Emmelina Ames, *friend of* Susan
- Mary Ann Simpkins
- Clarissa Peabody, *a genteel young lady*
- Louisa Perkins, *friend of* Clarissa
- Eliza Caroline Fairbanks, *a lover of Romance*
- Jane Tillbury Chew, *who is always hungry*

Miss Samantha Scruten, *the lady principal*

Miss Deborah Thompson, *the assistant preceptress*

The Reverend Josiah Leicester

Peter, Pansy } *children of the boarding school housekeeper; aged eight*

'NEATH THE SCEPTER OF SUSAN

SCENE—*A Boarding School; adaptable to early days of any girls' school or college. The time is in the early days of boarding schools,* about 1840, and the costumes are of that period. The girls are dressed in full, ruffled skirts and basques. The minister wears a long frock coat and high white stock.* PANSY *has pantalets showing below her full skirt.* PETER *wears a little blouse and knickerbockers. These two parts may be taken by older girls dressed as children.*

Most of the rôles are strongly marked character parts: Miss SCRUTEN *is tall, thin, sharp, prim and angular; Miss* THOMPSON *is small and pretty;* SUSAN *is vivacious;* CLARISSA *is a prig;* JANE *is fat and greedy;* LOUISA *is soft and sweet;* ELIZA *is sentimental;* EMMELINA *is healthy and energetic.*

* If this play is given at a school, the school name and a few local touches may be inserted to make it seem like the early life there.

ACT ONE

[*Girls seated in school parlor sewing on American flag.* CLARISSA *in center,* ELIZA *and* LOUISA *to right,* EMMELINA *and* MARY ANN *to left,* JANE *on floor in middle of semi-circle. Verse of Auld Lang Syne before curtain; chorus as curtain rises.*]

LOUISA—Oh, girls, don't you think this is the sweetest idea to make a flag for the boarding house?

CLARISSA—Oh, yes, I do think it is lovely, and Miss Scruten was so touched she almost wept with emotion when I told her about it.

EMMELINA—Well, *I* don't think it's so lovely. When do you suppose I am going to get that old Butler's Analogy studied? Patriotism is all right in its place, but not in the middle of study hour. [*Pulls flag.*] Say, Eliza, I wish you wouldn't take the whole flag over in your corner.

ELIZA—Oh, why won't you call me Elise? It is such a little thing to ask and it would make me so happy. It reminds me so much of certain summer evenings at Newburyport. [*Sighs. All groan.*]

JANE—Girls, did you know that Susan Virginia has just got a box from home, and it's perfectly *huge?*

ELIZA—You are always talking about food, Jane.

I should think you would endeavor to put your thoughts occasionally on something higher than eating.

JANE—Well, I guess *you* couldn't help talking about victuals if you were always simply famished as I am. We have plenty to eat at the table and very good things, too, but there isn't a meal I eat that I couldn't eat over again. I've just written home to mother to send me a box, even if it's only got cold potatoes in it. Emmelina Ames, do you know what is in Susan Virginia's?

EMMELINA—I just had a glimpse of it before the bell rang for Butler's and——

JANE—[*Impatiently*] Well, what did you *see?* Can't you hurry up and not keep me in such agonizing suspense?

EMMELINA—[*Laughing*] Oh, there was a sponge cake, and oranges, and lollypops, and a box that looked suggestive of pickled limes, and lemon sticks, and you know those great, big, round molasses cookies——

JANE—Oh, you mean thing. It just makes my mouth water. I can't wait a minute longer. I am going right upstairs to fetch it—I—I mean to ask Susan to come down. [*All laugh.*] Come along, Emmelina Ames. [*Exeunt* EM. *and* JANE, *L.B.*]

ELIZA—Oh, I think it is so vulgar to think so much of one's stomach!

LOUISE—It's a wonder to me how Susan, with all her radical ideas about women's being educated

above domesticity, can pay so much attention to food.

MARY ANN—Well, I've noticed she doesn't object to good things to eat, even if she doesn't want to spend all her life cooking them.

CLARISSA—*Miss Scruten* says she thinks it is perfectly scandalous that any young woman of pretended refinement can even entertain such notions.

MARY ANN—Miss Scruten is cross because she heard Susan's remark when the doctor said to call at the seminary was like coming into a garden of roses.

ELIZA—What did Susan say?

MARY ANN—Why, she said if we girls were the roses, Miss Scruten must be the primrose of the garden. She spoke in an undertone, but the doctor heard it and thought it a good joke.

LOUISA—And they say Miss Thompson, who was with him, was also amused.

MARY ANN—I think Miss Thompson is just dandy.

CLARISSA—That's where I don't agree with you, Mary Ann. Furthermore, I think it is wrong of Miss Thompson to countenance such rudeness and impertinence on the part of Susan Virginia Jones. [*She snaps shears to emphasize each word.*]

[*Enter* SUSAN, EMMELINA *and* JANE, *carrying box.* SUSAN *is dressed in a new gown.*]

SUSAN—It's mighty lucky for the welfare of this female seminary that they don't call upon you and your Miss Scruten for advice as to what they shall

countenance and what they shall not countenance here. Miss Thompson is all right, and worth all the scrutinizing Miss Scrutens in the world.

[*Enter* Miss Scruten, *L.B. She is a prim, stiff, angular old maid.*]

Miss Scruten—[*Pointing finger at* Susan] Fie upon you for a froward, indelicate female. Miss Jones, this has gone quite far enough. I am indeed grieved, shocked, and astounded that you should entertain such sentiments even in your inmost being, but that you should give utterance to them in the presence of this assemblage of young ladies is unpardonable.

[*While* Miss Scruten *is talking, girls are busy concealing box. They giggle and nudge each other.* Clarissa *tries to suppress them by motioning from the other side of the room, where she stands with* Louisa.]

Miss Scruten—Far be it from me, my dear young ladies, to check the youthful cheerfulness of your young hearts, to see you sorrowful and desponding, or to expect in you an unnatural precocity of judgment and forethought. The world with all its perplexities will soon enough change the buoyancy of youthful joy into heaviness. Enjoy this springtime of your existence, this morning of your lives, but enjoy with moderation and spare something from the exuberance of your emotions to soften and cheer the sober and pensive season, which, should your lives be spared, will as surely follow as evening fol-

lows morning or as spring is followed by autumn. [*Sharply.* Louisa *weeps on* Clarissa's *shoulder.*] As for you, Susan Virginia Jones, I will send for our minister at once, dear Mr. Leicester, who is even now in the drawing room, that he may deal with you as he thinks is fitting. And let us trust that his saintly words may lead you back into the ways of propriety.

[*Exit* Miss Scruten. *Girls sink into chairs.*]

Louisa—Will he be very severe?

Mary Ann—What will you do, Sue?

Eliza—Isn't it dreadful?

Jane—I hope they don't take your box away for punishment.

Clarissa—"Woe unto them that call good evil and evil good, and take light for darkness and darkness for light."

Susan—All I hope is that he won't ask for the abstract of last Sunday's sermon we are supposed to have written. [*Horror-stricken look on the faces of* Emmelina *and* Mary Ann, *who have forgotten it.*]

Susan—Come, Mary Ann, lace my bodice quickly. I am so glad that I was trying on my new dress that came in the box, for the surest way to win a man's sympathies, even a minister's, is through dress.

Eliza—Why, Susan, how can you be so profane? I am sure he will think only of the goodness and beauty of your soul.

Susan—[*Squirming*] Oh, that hurts, Em.

CLARISSA—What ails you, child? Emmelina, I should think you would lose all patience with such an ungrateful girl. She is doing her best, Susan.

SUSAN—Her best! Emmelina always tickles me when she laces my bodice just because she knows I'm dreadfully ticklish. Don't Em. I never saw such a tight dress, anyway.

CLARISSA—Why, Susan.

SUSAN—Well, last year when I saw a ripe apple at the top of a tree I could climb up and get it. But now in these new dresses I have to sit at the foot of the tree like a demure old maid and wait for the apples to fall into my lap.

CLARISSA—Well I should hope so indeed. A female of eighteen to climb apple trees! Why the very idea is indelicate!

SUSAN—Oh, what a commotion about such a small matter! [*Begins singing, others join in gradually.* CLARISSA *is shocked and tries to stop them.*]

ALL—[*Singing.*]—

Oh, dear, what can the matter be,
Oh, dear, what can the matter be,
Oh, dear, what can the matter be,
Johnny's not home from the fair?
He promised to bring me a trinket to please me,
And then for a kiss, oh, he vowed he would tease me,
He promised to bring me a bunch of blue ribbon
To tie up my bonnie——

ELIZA—[*Rushing down to front stage*] The minister, the minister!

ALL—[*Suddenly stopping, but at* SUSAN*'s lead going into*]—

Onward, Christian soldiers,
Marching as to war,
With the——

[*Enter* MISS SCRUTEN *and* MR. LEICESTER.]

MISS SCRUTEN—Miss Jones, Mr. Leicester, the shepherd of our flock, has been informed of your misdemeanor, and will endeavor to lead you back into the paths of maidenly conduct. Young ladies—— [MISS SCRUTEN *steps to back of stage and lights candle. Girls take theirs, one by one, from the "what-not" and pass by* MISS SCRUTEN, *lighting them from hers as they pass. They wish her good night and courtesy as they go out. Exit* MISS SCRUTEN *after glaring once more at* SUSAN *and smiling sweetly upon* MR. LEICESTER. SUSAN *is L.F.,* MR. LEICESTER *R.F.*]

MR. LEICESTER—[*Aside*] Now what shall I do? This business of remonstrance with young ladies is one phase of my duties at which I am not adept.

SUSAN—[*Aside*] I do believe he is more embarrassed than I am.

MR. LEICESTER—[*Turning and looking at her. Aside*] My, but she's pretty!

SUSAN—[*Aside.*] He is thinking how becoming my new dress is.

MR. LEICESTER—[*With effort*] Miss Jones——

SUSAN—Yes, Mr. Leicester.

MR. LEICESTER—As you know, I am requested

to remonstrate with you concerning your behavior, which has been unseemly in the eyes of your preceptress.

SUSAN—[*Sighing*] Are you aware of the nature of my offense?

MR. LEICESTER—I must confess that Miss Scruten seemed unwilling to inform me of the exact nature of the error of your ways.

SUSAN—My chief offense was to say that Miss Thompson was worth all the scrutinizing Miss Scrutens in the world. [*Eyes twinkle*]

MR. LEICESTER—[*Laughing*] Why, Miss Jones——

SUSAN—I might as well confess all my sins now and be done with it once and for all. Furthermore, I have expressed my belief that the female mind is as capable of serious thought as that of the other sex, a belief that Miss Scruten thinks is indelicate. I have said above a whisper that I wish to study economics. Miss Scruten claims that such views would drag the race down to perdition, for, she queries, if women study economics, who will darn the stockings and fry the crullers for the men? She thinks we should be the clinging vine upon the strong oak of manhood. And that, Mr. Leicester, is the secret of her crabbedness. She endeavors to make herself the clinging vine but can find no oak to cling to.

MR. LEICESTER—Why, Miss Jones, I don't see what I can say——

SUSAN—[*Frankly*] There is nothing that you can say, for you dread that scrutinizing glance as much as I do. Mr. Leicester, can't I help you? I am so fond of Miss Thompson and I can see that you care for her too. If you will only give me your confidence, I know that I can help you.

MR. LEICESTER—Why, Miss Jones, I—I thank you for your——

SUSAN—Then you *will* let me help you, won't you? You know I should love to do anything in the world for Miss Thompson.

MR. LEICESTER—Why, I should be more than gratified, but what can you do?

SUSAN—I can keep Miss Scruten away so that you and Miss Thompson can have five minutes together sometimes without her interference. Let me speak to Miss Thompson now. [MR. LEICESTER *offers his arm. They walk to the door together chatting.* CLARISSA *appears at back door and overhears the conversation.*]

MR. LEICESTER—It is very good of you to offer your kind assistance. [*Exit* SUSAN.]

CLARISSA—[*Aside*] Oh, what a spirit of evil! The wretched girl has the power of Satan himself to lead even the minister astray. I will see if Miss Scruten can not put a stop to this mischief e'er it go farther. [*Exit* CLARISSA. *Enter* MISS THOMPSON.]

MISS THOMPSON—Did you wish to speak to me about Susan, Mr. Leicester?

Mr. Leicester—No, Miss Thompson, not about Susan, but about yourself. For the last month I have been endeavoring to snatch a moment in which to tell you what a place you have come to fill in my life. You must feel how dear you are to me.

Miss Thompson—Oh, Mr. Leicester, I—— [Mr. Leicester *draws near and is on the point of taking her in his arms when* Miss Scruten *enters.*]

Miss Scruten—Oh, pardon me, if I seem to be intruding. [*Awkward pause*]

Miss Thompson—[*Hesitating*] Oh, certainly.

Miss Scruten—I came to inquire if that most froward and impertinent miss has been swayed back to the ways of righteousness and has offered an apology for her most serious misdemeanors. I am indeed most grieved and shocked that a reprimand from you should be necessary.

Mr. Leicester—Oh, well——

Miss Scruten—Miss Thompson, will you see to the girls upstairs?

Mr. Leicester—[*To* Miss Thompson, *who has reached the door.*] Good night, Miss Thompson.

Miss Thompson—[*Turning*] Good night, Mr. Leicester. [*Exit*]

Miss Scruten—It is so comforting to know that there is a man to whom we can turn at a crucial time in our academic duties.

Mr. Leicester—It is the duty of a minister to be at the call of his parishioners.

Miss Scruten—But *you* are so sympathetic, so

tender,—your very presence seems to have a beneficial effect upon the wayward, while to those who need no reproof you are a noble leader who——

MR. LEICESTER—Did you wish to speak to me about Susan, Miss Scruten?

MISS SCRUTEN—Yes, but also about your improving influence upon this institution. You inspire us all to better deeds, dear Mr. Leicester. There is that emanating from your gentle spirit which stirs the very depths of the heart to tender meditation and rapture. Your very pres——

MR. LEICESTER—I think you will have no more trouble with Miss Susan; I find her a very interesting young lady.

MISS SCRUTEN—Oh, really! How surprising for one of your profession to overlook such froward impertinence as hers!

MR. LEICESTER—Is there anything else wanted, Madam?

MISS SCRUTEN—Well—well—n-no——

MR. LEICESTER—[*Bowing very formally*] Then good evening, Miss Scruten. [*Exit* MR. LEICESTER.]

MISS SCRUTEN—Why should he depart so suddenly? I could have expatiated upon his strength, his tenderness, his nobility, his glorious soul—Oh, that I might tell him the profound admiration I feel for him. [*Sighs*] But it may not be. [*Sighs*] I must retire to rest.

[*Exit* MISS SCRUTEN. *Enter* SUSAN *in wrapper, looks around and calls in whisper.*]

SUSAN—Come on, girls, she's gone. [MARY ANN, JANE, ELIZA, *and* EMMELINA *enter on tiptoe, with candles and food.*]

JANE—Have you got the pickled limes? Look out, Em., don't spill any of that jam on Scruty's new rag carpet. It is awfully good jam and I don't want any lost. [*They sit around box,* SUSAN *in center.*]

EMMELINA—And now, Susan, what happened?

SUSAN—Well, I switched the conversation from misdemeanors to love.

ALL—[*Gasping*] Susan, how did you do it?

SUSAN—I can't tell you the particulars now, but the vital point is that I have promised to give him a chance to propose to Miss Thompson.

ELIZA—Oh, how romantic! I can just imagine I am living in the pages of Clarissa Harlowe. I think lovemaking is just too sweet anyway. And just think, Susan, if you can only be the unseen power that draws those two souls together—how wonderful it will be! You will be as the enchantress in Arcady.

JANE—Do pass over another sugar plum.

SUSAN—Look out, Jane, you may regret this. "A little more than a little is by much too much." [CLARISSA *looks in and listens.*]

CLARISSA—I thought I heard a noise. [*Sees girls. Crosses stage on tiptoe.*]

SUSAN—Whatever we do must be done to-morrow. No time must be lost. You never can tell what Miss Scruten will do.

CLARISSA—Again I am in the nick of time. I will inform Miss Scruten of this new mischief ere it go further. [*Exit* CLARISSA. *Makes slight noise which* SUSAN *hears.*]

SUSAN—What was that?

EMMELINA—I thought I heard something too. Let's go upstairs. [*They start to gather up things.*]

JANE—Wait till I've finished my lemon stick. I don't believe there was any noise anyway. [*They gather up remnants of the feast and exeunt. Enter* MISS SCRUTEN *after a moment of quiet.* MISS SCRUTEN *has on long sleeved flannel night dress and a night cap. She peers around with candle.*]

MISS SCRUTEN—This is most peculiar. Clarissa informed me there was a gathering here. The room is quite empty, however. No doubt Susan Virginia has led the students to some undignified prank, which they are endeavoring to hide from me. Alas that the youthful mind can not be satisfied with the acquisition of elegant accomplishments, but must ever turn to the devising of unseemly actions for the annoyance of others. Oh, that I might leave this institution and fly far away to

"Where Meander's amber waves
In lingering labyrinths creep,——"

Oh that I might link myself in tender devotion to that most noble, that most tender spirit, the shepherd of our flock. I would cover the rugged bark of his manly strength with the twining tendrils of my

feminine affection; I would enwrap him in the sweet blossom of my love.

As the stars that shine above
This filthy world of sin below,
Is the power of the love
That I on thee bestow.
Oh, my beloved divine Josiah
Of this passion I'll expiah!

Curtain.

ACT TWO

SCENE—*School room; desk at right. One chair at right front, two at left back, and one behind desk. Two benches at left of stage.* EMMELINA *and* MARY ANN *are sweeping at left,* LOUISA *is dusting at blackboard,* ELIZA *is tidying desk,* JANE *is under desk.*

EMMELINA—"Hasten on, young ladies," we've got to tidy this room ere Dame Scruten enter.

MARY ANN—Oh, gemini! One of the chalks is gone. Louisa, I verily believe you have gone and lost it. Probably you threw it out with the duster, ruthless girl!

LOUISA—Why, Mary Ann, I was extra careful what I shook out with the duster. Now you have gone and hurt my feelings. [*She weeps and wipes her eyes on the duster.*]

EMMELINA—Very likely Jane has taken it for a stick of sugar candy, and eaten it.

JANE—[*From under desk*] Here is your old chalk, but I can't find my lemon stick anywhere. And I wanted my lemon stick; I did not have time to complete sucking it last night when Miss Scruten came and chased us out.

MARY ANN—Oh, didn't we have a good time last

night! My, weren't those pickled limes good? But I just wish I had seen Miss Scruten's face when she came in and found the birds had flown.

EMMELINA—And the doughnuts, oh the doughnuts!!!

ELIZA—And the sugar plums,—oh, how delectable they were!

JANE—Why, Elise, I thought you said it was indelicate to speak of food or think of one's stomach.

[CLARISSA *enters from center back and comes down stage into group.*]

CLARISSA—[*Excited*] Oh, girls, are you not excited about the spelling match our class is going to have to-day? I think it is one of the most thrilling episodes of our career here. Why it is almost as exciting as the croquet tournament we had last fall. And dear Miss Scruten, too, is intensely interested in it. She says she can think of nothing else. She fears only that it may interfere with our regular duties.

EMMELINA—I should think she was intensely interested in it! I met her coming down to breakfast this morning with her nightcap still on.

CLARISSA—I do hope you told her.

EMMELINA—Well, I just guess I didn't! But Louisa came along just then and spoiled all the fun.

CLARISSA—[*Putting arm around* LOUISA]—Oh, you dear girl! [LOUISA *looks pleased.*] But girls, I have a secret that Miss Scruten said I might tell you this morning. [CLARISSA *looks very important.*]

ALL—[*Stopping work*] What is it?

CLARISSA—Why, Mr. Leicester, our beloved minister, has consented to come and act as judge at our spelling match.

EMMELINA—That must please Miss Scruten.

CLARISSA—Why, how can you be so disrespectful? I should think the episode of last night would have sufficiently impressed upon you the elements of propriety. [*Walking down to R.F. with head in air and her important manner.*]

[*Enter* SUSAN, *center back and comes down to middle of group.*]

SUSAN—[*Mimicking* MISS SCRUTEN] Good morning, young ladies.

ELIZA—Bon jour, Suzanne!

MARY ANN—Heyday, Sue!

EMMELINA—Good day, milady!

CLARISSA—Good morning.

SUSAN—Greetings fair damsels! Hast seen my tiny cherubim this morn?

ALL—What do you mean?

SUSAN—I mean those mischievous little imps of the housekeeper's, Peter and Pansy. I started them on their way half an hour ago, but the young, you know [*Imitating* MISS SCRUTEN], so often fall by the wayside. [*Going to L.B., calls*] Peter! Pansy! [*Coming back to girls*] Girls, I have a glorious scheme!

ALL—What is it? [*Enter* PETER, *running, and* PANSY *in pursuit from L.B.*]

ALL—What's the matter, children?

PANSY—[*Center front*] He said he'd give me a bite of his apple core, and now he won't.

PETER—Didn't neither.

PANSY—[*Stamping*] Did teither.

CLARISSA—Children, you *mustn't* quarrel. Don't you *know* you mustn't quarrel? And above all things don't contradict. Haven't you been told, time after time, that you must not contradict?

PETER—[*Pointing finger at* PANSY] There!

To contradict is always rude
Whate'er the matter be,
Besides it should be understood
That thoughts to all are free.

But children never should pretend
In cases e'er so slight
To contradict a wiser friend
Pretending to be right.

Then never let your childish tongue
In such a cause engage;
Submit and listen while you're young
That you may speak with age.

PANSY—[*Same business*]

And if you have a piece of cake,
When you with children play,
You must not eat it all yourself,
But give a part away.

You must not speak a naughty word,
You must not tell a lie,
You must not contradict and make
Your little sister cry.

[*Bursts into tears and hits him.*]

CLARISSA—[*Separating them*] Now, stop quarreling, children. Has Miss Scruten taught you yet that pretty little dialogue entitled "Garden Conversations"?

PETER—Yup. You want us to recite it?

ALL—Oh, yes, do!

PETER—I want to be the grandfather. Now you get over there.

PANSY—No, I want to get up on the table.

PETER—Oh, so do I, too!

MARY ANN—[*Lifting them up*] All right.

CLARISSA—Oh, do you think you'd better.

MARY ANN—Oh, it's all right.

CLARISSA—Well, I don't know. If Miss Scruten should come in and find the children on the table, she would be very much displeased.

MARY ANN—That is so and you never know when she will come popping in. I guess you'd better jump down, children.

CHILDREN—But we like it up here.

PANSY—It is just like riding on the top of the stagecoach coming over from —— [*Fill in name of nearby town.*]

PETER—It is just like the air balloon we saw at the fair.

MARY ANN—Come down and I'll give you a piece of Jane's candy.

CHILDREN—Oh, will you? [*They scramble down and run for candy.*]

EMMELINA—No, you can't have it until you have said your piece.

PETER—All right. Now, I'll be the grandfather.

PANSY—And I'll be Ann. [*They make stiff little bows and begin. Girls sit around and listen.*]

PETER—Take care, take care, my pretty maid,
And do not heedless tread,
Lest you that little *worrrm* destroy
That lies in its soft bed.

PANSY—Oh, grandpa, let me kill it now,
It is a naughty worm,
For it may soon much bigger grow
And then may do me harm.

PETER—It is a harmless little thing,
So let it peaceful lie;
It soon will mount upon the wing
And round the garden fly!

PANSY—[*Shaking her head*]
Oh, no, grandpa; it can not fly,
The creature has no wings;
It will not hurt a worm to die,
They are such *ugly* things.

PETER—Three days has 'lapsed.

PANSY—What's 'lapsed?

PETER—'L—lapsed? 'Lapsed? Why, don't you know what 'lapsed means?

PANSY—No, what does it mean?

PETER—Why, 'lapsed means,—it means—— [*To girls*] What does 'lapsed mean?

CLARISSA—Doubtless you mean to say *e*-lapsed. Elapsed means to pass over, and is generally used, children, in reference to time.

PETER—Three days has *e*-lapsed.

Has Annie been a quiet child,
And washed, and combed her hair?
Then she may go this morning mild
And take the garden air.

PANSY—Oh, grandpa, see that pretty thing
That sits upon the spray;
How bright its little spotted wing!
Oh, see, it flies away!

PETER—Yes, Ann, and see that butterfly,
That flutters 'round so gay,
And do you wish it now to die?
You did the other day.

PANSY—I don't remember that I wished
This pretty bird were dead;
I'm sure it must be innocent,
I wish it may be fed.

PETER—You called it naughty, ugly worm,
This is the very same,—
Although it has a different shape
As well as a different name.
Now learn, dear Ann, and don't despise
What you can't understand;

Remember, 'twas our Father, God,
What formed 'em by his hand.

[*Girls clap.*]

CHILDREN—[*Going for candy*] Now we want our sticks of candy. [MARY ANN *takes piece of* JANE'S *candy and gives to them.*]

SUSAN—Jane, may I borrow a doughnut?

JANE—I'll give you half of it.

SUSAN—I want the whole of it.

JANE—[*Sticking finger through hole*] All right, I'll give you the *hole.*

SUSAN—You exasperating little huzzy! Can't you see it is for my scheme? Aren't you just as anxious as the rest of us that Mr. Leicester should propose to Miss Thompson?

[JANE *gives* SUSAN *doughnut.*]

SUSAN—Peter, come here a minute. [PETER *runs to her.*] Now, I'll give you this doughnut, Peter, if you will——

[*Bell rings outside, drowning* SUSAN'S *voice.*]

SUSAN—[*Dramatically*] Girls, I take command over this romance, and you will see events crowd one upon another when Susan swings the scepter! [*Exits L.F., with* PETER. PANSY *follows.*]

[*Enter* MISS SCRUTEN *in bonnet and shawl, R.B.*]

MISS SCRUTEN—Good morning, young ladies.

ALL—Good morning, ma'am.

MISS SCRUTEN—Hasten on, young ladies. You are not aware of the habit of lagging you are forming.

[*Girls hurry to places.*]

Miss Scruten—Miss Perkins, will you assist me to remove my bonnet and shawl?

Louise—With pleasure, Miss Scruten. [*She does so.* Miss Scruten *sits at desk. Enter* Miss Thompson *R.B., and sits to left of desk.*]

Miss Scruten—[*Rapping on desk with ruler*] Attention, young ladies, for the reporting of exceptions. A?

Emmelina—[*Rising*] Emmelina Ames.

Miss Scruten—[*Writing*] Emmelina Ames.

Emmelina—[*In scared voice*] Miss Scruten, I grieve to report that I laughed after the tardy bell.

Miss Scruten—[*After glaring at* Emmelina *and writing*] B? C?

Jane—[*Same business*] Jane Tillbury Chew.

Miss Scruten—[*Writing*] Jane Tillbury Chew.

Jane—Please, Miss Scruten, ma'am, I took two biscuits away from the breakfast table this morning. [Miss Scruten *writes. Girls giggle.*]

Miss Scruten—D? E? F?

Eliza—Elise Caroleen Fairbanks.

Miss Scruten—Miss *Eliza Caroline* Fairbanks.

Eliza—Miss Scruten, I lost myself in a romance yesterday, and committed the sin of persuing it in study hour.

Miss Scruten—[*Amazed expression*] Miss Fairbanks, I—I presume you intend to say *pe-ruse!* [*Girls giggle.*] G? H? [*Enter* Mr. Leicester *B.R.* Miss Scruten *sees him and bows.*] Young

ladies, as our beloved minister has come to act as judge at our spelling match, we will postpone this matter until a more opportune moment. Good morning, dear Mr. Leicester. Will you not be seated? [Mr. Leicester *has started to sit down by* Miss T. Miss S. *now indicates seat on other side of desk.*]

Mr. Leicester—[*Sitting. Aside.*] Ah, how ravishing Deborah looks this morning!

Miss Scruten—Young ladies, you may now take your places for the exercises in spelling. [*Girls pick up benches and put them against wall.* Jane *spills candy.*]

Jane—Oh, dear, there go all my comfits!

Miss Scruten—Young ladies, young ladies! Let them lie. Miss Chew, I presume you are aware that concealing eatables on your person is in violation of the rules and regulations of this female seminary.

Jane—Oh, but what will happen to them if I don't pick them up?

Miss Scruten—Young ladies. [*With a squelching look and pointing to foot of line*] Miss Chew, you may take your place at the foot of the line. Let us commence. Miss Simpkins, semiphlogisticated.

Mary Ann—Semiphlogisticated. S-e-m-, sem, i-i, semi, f-l-o, flo——

Miss Scruten—Incorrect. You may take your place beneath Miss Chew. [*Pointing*]

[*Order for spelling match, L.F.* Mary Ann.

Then going back, CLARISSA, EMMELINA, LOUISA, ELISE *and* JANE.]

MISS SCRUTEN—[*With sweetest smile*] Miss Peabody.

CLARISSA—Semiphlogisticated, s-e-m, sem, i-i, semi, p-h-l-o, phlo, g-i-s, gis, t-y, ti,——

MISS SCRUTEN—I am sorry, Miss Peabody, but you will have to surrender your position. Miss Ames. [CLARISSA *goes sadly to foot of line.*]

EMMELINA—Semiphlogisticated, s-e-m, i-i, semi, p-h-l-o, phlo, semiphlo, g-i-s, gis, semiphlogis, t-i, ti, semiphlogisti, c-a ca semiphlogistica, t-e-d, semiphlogisticated. [*She spells it all in one breath.*]

MISS SCRUTEN—Correct. Miss Perkins, you may take the next word. Mucososaccharine.

LOUISA—Mucososaccharine. M-u, mu, c-o, co, muco, s-o, so mucoso— [*Screams*]

[*Enter* SUSAN *from R.B., half carrying* PETER, *who is bound in bloody bandages. Goes to L.F. Girls crowd around him.*]

ALL—What's the matter? Is he hurt, etc.

SUSAN—[*Tragically*] He's *cut.*

MISS THOMPSON—[*Going to* PETER] Girls, stand back immediately.

[MISS SCRUTEN *goes forward and looks at* PETER. *Bending over she says*] "Oh, goodness, gracious!" [*and totters back from L.F. to R.F., looking over her shoulder at* MR. L., *who keeps backing away. He finally finds himself forced to catch her as she faints purposely into his arms.* SUSAN *sees the turn affairs*

are taking and goes over to help him put her on a chair. He fans her awkwardly. SUSAN *and* EMMELINE *giggle.*]

MISS THOMPSON—Girls, give the boy air. I will carry the child out and bandage him.

SUSAN—[*To* MR. L.] Now, I guess she will come to all right. She loses her self-control easily. Just look at Miss Thompson now. She is the kind of woman who can bring order out of chaos. And what an authoritative manner for such a little lady. Oh, goodness, she is lifting Peter. He is too heavy for her.

[MISS SCRUTEN *has been listening, and gets up suddenly at last word.*]

MISS SCRUTEN—[*Crossing to L.F.*] Let *me* have the child. He is too heavy for such a frail little thing as you. [MISS S. *takes boy from* MISS T.]

MR. LEICESTER—[*Starting across stage*] Let me help you?

SUSAN—[*Taking* MR. L.'s *arm and detaining him, pretending to faint*] Oh, Mr. Leicester——

MISS THOMPSON—Girls, school is dismissed. Go.

[*Exit* MISS S. *and* PETER *L.F.; then girls L.F. and L.B.*]

SUSAN—[*Faintly to* MR. L.] Oh, my head is swimming around. The sight of blood is too much. Won't you help me to a chair. [*Seeing stage clear except* MISS T., *who is coming towards her*] I'll keep Miss Scruten away for five minutes. Don't waste your time.

[*Exit* SUSAN *L.F.*]

MR. LEICESTER—At last, Miss Thompson, I have a moment to——

[*Enter* CLARISSA *L.B., very nervous and excited.*]

CLARISSA—Pardon me, but Miss Scruten sent me to fetch her sticking plaster. [*Going to desk*] Do you know where Miss Scruten keeps her desk—I mean her sticking plaster. It doesn't seem to be in this drawer. Do you know, Miss Thompson, where Miss Scruten keeps her sticking plaster?

MISS THOMPSON—[*Tapping her foot with impatience*] No, I do not.

CLARISSA—[*Not noticing her irritation*] Oh, here it is. I'll take it to her immediately. It's for poor, dear little Peter. [*Pausing as she goes towards L.B.*] His forehead is so cut and Miss Scruten is going to put some sticking plaster on the wound. The sweet little fellow! It *is* such a shame he is so hurt. [*Exit*]

MR. LEICESTER—Now I have a chance to say what I was trying to express last night when we were interrup——

[*Enter* ELIZA *L.F., tottering.*]

ELIZA—[*Throwing herself upon* MISS T. *and fainting*] Oh, dear Miss Thompson, all this excitement has been too much for such delicate sensibilities as mine. I can hold out no longer against the strain of conflicting emotions.

[*Enter* SUSAN *L.B.*]

SUSAN—[*Grabbing* ELIZA *by the arm and taking*

her out left front] You slippy-sloppy little numskull, can't you *see* you're interfering?

MR. LEICESTER—Now, at last, may I have the answer for which I have been waiting so long?

SUSAN—[*At door L.F.*] Miss Scruten has discovered all. I can not hold her off another minute. She's coming. [*Exit*]

MR. LEICESTER—Deborah, tell me that you love me.

MISS THOMPSON—[*Throwing herself into his arms*] I love you.

[*Enter* MISS SCRUTEN *L.F., dragging the struggling but unhurt* PETER.]

MISS SCRUTEN—I do not understand this at all. There is positively no cut on the child. [*Turns and sees lovers. Gasp of astonishment and fury.*] Oh, *now* I see it all! This accident was prearranged to give *you* a chance to propose to *her*. No doubt it is one of the outrageous doings of Susan Virginia Jones!

[*Girls enter L.B. and R.B. Lovers stand happily defiant in center of semicircle thus formed.*]

GIRLS—Oh, Susan, you're a wonder.

PETER—[*Stepping to immediate center front and speaking to audience*] No, Sir, *I* done it all.

Curtain

RAINY DAY PLAYS

FOREWORD

Rainy Day Plays are intended, as the name indicates, to be given on a rainy day, when one has to stay in the house and is confronted by that difficult question: What shall we do? Each play can be planned, cast, rehearsed and presented in a single afternoon, although they may also be more carefully prepared for entertainment at an informal party.

The outlines given here are merely skeletons on which you build up the play. The words are not to be memorized, as they only suggest the dialogue, which must be worked out by the players. Upon the life and spirit of the conversations depends largely the success of the production.

First read over the play and select the actors for the parts. If there are more actors than parts, select a stage manager to arrange the stage, a property master to collect the costumes, and a coach to take charge of rehearsing. The rest can be "stage hands."

Next prepare the costumes. If you do not happen to have at hand the articles suggested, think up others.

Then read the outline aloud again. This time, each actor must learn the sense of what he or she is to say and when to come in.

Now you are ready to rehearse.

One person, the coach, must have the book and tell the others when to come in, reminding them what to say if they forget.

The second time you go over it, make the speeches longer and put in as much action as you can. Imagine yourself to be the character you impersonate, and try to enter into the spirit of the part. If you have some event to describe, make your description as vivid as possible. It is the little points which make what you say seem real to your audience. For instance, in the opening scene of "The Little Lame Prince," the two courtiers, in telling of the plans for the baptism, should describe the fine costumes of the king and his courtiers, should tell what the baby looks like, should relate what food has been prepared for the feast, how many cooks were kept busy for how many days, and what wonderfully wrought platters of gold and silver are to be used.

The third time you rehearse the play, go through it from start to finish without help, if possible. Perhaps you will need a fourth rehearsal before inviting in the audience.

Arrange the chairs across the middle of the room for the audience and set your stage at one end. A screen will serve for a curtain, but if there is none, never mind, as the actors can enter and exit through a door leading to another room. Sometimes the stage can be set in the hall, which is separated from the living room by curtains.

As the setting is necessarily simple, it is well to have some one announce where each scene is laid, unless the scenes and cast are written out and distributed as a program.

SNOW WHITE AND ROSE RED

CHARACTERS—*You all know the story from Grimm's Fairy Tales, "Snow White and Rose Red." The characters are* SNOW WHITE, ROSE RED, *their* MOTHER, *the* BEAR *and the* DWARF.

COSTUMES—SNOW WHITE *and* ROSE RED *wear a shawl or 'kerchief over their dresses. A little cap will make them look old-fashioned.*

Their MOTHER *wears a long dress, a 'kerchief around her neck, a cap and perhaps spectacles. Sweeping caps are good, or a boudoir cap, if it is not too fancy, will do. A cap can be made easily of a large handkerchief by folding and sewing it, the seam in back.*

The hardest costume is for the BEAR. *Of course, if there is a fur rug in the house, then the question is settled. A fur robe is also good. A big shaggy fur coat is fine, but I shouldn't take any other fur coat, because you might harm it crawling about on the floor. If there is nothing of real fur to be had, then tie up the bear in a brown shawl, and make believe it is fur. Tie up his head, anyway. Inside he is dressed as a prince, wearing a white blouse and bloomers. A sash of scarlet or some other bright color will make him look festive. A tam-*

o'shanter with a feather stuck in one side has a very "princey" look.

The DWARF *may be dressed almost any way, so that he looks queer and outlandish. Above all, he should be small. A ruffle around his neck, a pointed cap, streamers of crêpe paper hanging from his belt, all will help. Some pointed leather slippers would be fine. Stuff them with paper so they will not fall off. The bigger they are the better. His long whiskers can be made of anything handy; excelsior, or shavings, or cotton, or a piece of rope raveled out. Tie them on around his ears.*

PROPERTIES—[*To be collected before the play begins*] *Book, broom, tiny scraps of white paper for snow, fishline, scissors, market baskets, knitting or sewing, something with which to make a river bank, and a bag of jewels.*

The bank can be made of a lounge or davenport, covered with brown or green cloth. A few sticks or leaves will help much to make it look like a mound of earth beside a brook.

Bright pebbles, pieces of glass and beads can be used as jewels.

SCENE 1

ANNOUNCED—*The scene is the interior of* ROSE RED *and* SNOW WHITE'S *home.*

When the curtain rises, mother is seen dusting and clearing up the room. [*If there is no curtain, she enters and goes to work.*] "I wonder where the children are," she says, talking aloud as she works. She does not, however, seem worried. Then she continues talking about them, saying that they often go off in the late afternoon and get caught in the woods at nightfall, but always sleep soundly and never come to harm. How glad she is that Rose Red and Snow White love each other so dearly and play so happily together. Wherever one goes the other goes, too. They never quarrel, but look after each other. [*The call of children from outside*] Ah! There they are now. How relieved she is to have them safely back again. She runs to the door and the children come in. Rose Red is lively and runs about gayly; Snow White is sweet and quiet.

The children kiss their mother, both trying at once to tell her of their adventure. At last, unable to understand their excited talk, she bids them be quiet and tell the story one at a time. They obey her, although they keep interrupting each other. This is what they tell: Yesterday it had taken them so long to do their errand that they found they could not get home by nightfall, so they decided to sleep in the woods. They made themselves a nice, soft bed of leaves. They could not see what was near them, for it was very dark. But they were not frightened, so slept well, having sweet dreams. In the morning the sun wakened them. When they

looked up they saw a beautiful child sitting by them; she was more lovely than any one they had ever seen. Her hair was golden and shone in the morning sun, and her dress was of pure gleaming white. When she saw that they were awake and were looking at her, she smiled and quickly vanished, they knew not whither.

Then they started to explore their bedroom of the night before, but, walking only a few steps, they came to a sharp precipice. Below was a deep ravine, with holes so black they could not see the bottom. It seemed to end in a bottomless pit.

The children's mother explains that the beautiful child was the fairy who watches over the lives of good children and keeps them from falling over precipices into ravines or other dangerous places. Then she bids them get their baskets and they will all go to market. They go out.

Scene II

Announced—*The scene is the same, several weeks later.*

Mother and daughters sit before the fire. They show they are before the fire by the way they hold out their hands to warm them. They talk about how cold and stormy it is outside in the snow and how good the fire feels. The children ask their mother to read to them, and she says she will read while they work.

They get their sewing or knitting and sit on little stools at her feet. She puts on her spectacles and begins to read from her big book, from which, after talking about their favorite stories, they choose one.

Then comes a knock at the door. Mother bids Rose Red open the door, as it is probably some poor traveler caught in the storm. She runs to the door and peeps out. At first she says it is a poor man, and starts to open the door. Then she screams, and slams and bolts it. The others, also frightened, ask what is the matter. She cries out that it is a bear. Snow White, in terror, runs and hides under the sofa or chair or table. Rose Red puts a chair in front of the door and leans against it to keep it shut.

From outside comes the growl of the bear. Don't be afraid, he tells them in a growl which he tries to make pleasant. He will not harm them. He is half frozen in the storm and he begs to be allowed to come in by their warm fire.

Mother goes to the door and kindly invites him in, calling him "My poor bear," and saying how sorry she is that he is so cold. She tells the children not to be afraid, and they timidly approach the bear and stroke him.

The bear walks on all fours, swaying his head on his shoulders from side to side like the bears in the circus. He growls happily. As he snuggles down by the fire to warm himself the children begin to play

with him, overcoming their first fear. They tell him to be careful not to burn himself. Snow White gets a broom and brushes the snowflakes off his back, and Rose Red gets him a bowl of porridge, from which he drinks eagerly.

The children tug at his fur and play with him while he tells them stories of his past adventures. [*Make up some thrilling stories for this part.*]

They like him so much they invite him to stay and live with them forever and ever. He tells them he will come to see them every day during the winter, but in the spring he must go. They ask why, and he tells them this: He has great treasures of gold and precious stones hidden in the woods. [*Describe treasures.*] In the winter they are safe, for they are buried deep in the earth and the ground is frozen. But when spring comes and thaws the ground the wicked dwarfs of the woods dig down into his hiding places and try to find his treasures. He must go keep watch over them and drive away the dwarfs. Until spring he will be their playmate.

The children are delighted and romp with him. When they get too rough and hit him with a stick to make him growl he begs them to be gentle, saying:

"Snow White and Rose Red,
Don't beat your lover dead."

While they play the curtain drops. If there is no curtain, they all run off together.

Scene III

Announced—*The Scene is the woods.*

The bank is placed across the stage and the brook is supposed to be behind it, so that the dwarf can perch on top of it and fish over the edge. If there is a curtain or screen, he is found fishing there. If not, he must come in with his line, telling how he is going fishing and hopes to have a big haul. By his side he places the bag of jewels.

Look, he has caught a fish!

But suddenly he finds the fish has caught him, for his long beard is tangled. He wriggles and squeals and makes a great to-do. [*Make this part as funny as you can.*] He has a sharp, shrill voice.

The children enter. He calls to them to come help him. But he is not polite about it. He calls them crazy blockheads and senseless fools. He explains how he came to get into that fix, and tells them not to stand there giggling at him, like silly, smooth-faced milk-and-water ninnies.

The girls tell him to be quiet and patient and they will help him. But he keeps on scolding, and squirms so that they cannot get him free. At last Snow White takes a pair of scissors from her pocket, nips off the end of his beard and cries joyfully that now he is free.

Instead of being polite, he jumps around as if in agony, patting his beard affectionately and calling: "Oh, my poor beard! You ill-bred wretches have

hacked it off! Shame on you! You are jealous of me for my splendid beard, and would vent your spite by chopping it off every time you get a chance. May the spirits of dwarfdom hector and pester you for ever and ever!"

Rose Red finds the bag of jewels and starts to open it. He grabs it from her, again calling her names, and runs off, howling.

The children talk about him and how rude and ungrateful he is. This is the third time, Rose Red says, that they have rescued him—first, when his beard was caught in a cleft of a tree, and they freed him by cutting a little of it off, and again when the eagle tried to carry him away and they held on to him, only to be scolded by him for having mussed his clothes.

He is very rude, Snow White says, for he always calls them naughty names and never says a word about their saving his life. It is strange about the bag of jewels which he always has with him. The children talk of the jewels and wonder what he does with them.

They go off. The dwarf comes on, still carrying the bag. He runs to every part of the stage, peering everywhere, and, at last, seeing no one, he sits down in the center. He pours the jewels on floor and plays with them, laughing and squealing gleefully.

The children come back and see him there. They run in delight to see the pretty jewels, but he rises angrily and tells them to stop standing there gaping.

The jewels are not for the eyes of such as they. He calls them all the naughty names he can think of.

Suddenly, on comes the bear. The dwarf is now terrified and begs the bear to spare his life. He calls him "Dear Mr. Bear," and promises him all the beautiful jewels if he will spare him. Besides, he says, he is old and tough and would not be good to eat. But over there are two fine young girls, as tender and fat as little quails. Why does not the bear take them, for they would be tender, toothsome morsels of food. And the girls are wicked and should be grabbed up.

The bear says not a word, but with one move of his paw he knocks over the little dwarf, who falls and never moves again.

The children run away, frightened, but the bear calls after them: "Come back, Snow White and Rose Red. Don't you know me? I am your own bear."

They turn and come back happily. As they approach him, he stands erect and drops off his furry covering and false head. The prince, in all his glory, stands before them.

In amazement, they ask who he is, and he explains. He is a king's son, a prince. He has been enchanted by the wicked little dwarf, whose life the girls have saved too often. The dwarf had stolen his treasure and he had been doomed to wander about, disguised as a wild bear, until the death of the dwarf should set him free. Now, at last, the bad dwarf is dead and he is free.

The girls invite him to go home with them to supper, and he accepts with great pleasure.

"At the supper table I will tell you all about a wonderful dream I had when I was a bear," he says.

"What was it about?" they ask.

"It was a fairy dream. A beautiful fairy dressed in shimmery white came to me and told me that some time I should marry Snow White, while my brother should become the husband of Rose Red."

The girls are much pleased with the dream. "Now, let us go home to tell mother of our adventure and have supper," they say.

They all go off and live happily ever after.

THE WOODEN BOWL

CHARACTERS—*Girl, her mother, a farmer, his wife, his son, and other Japanese.*
COSTUMES—*All are dressed in Japanese kimonos.*

SCENE I

ANNOUNCED—*The scene is the home of a Japanese girl and her mother.*

Enter the mother and the daughter. The daughter is very beautiful. The mother is feeble and has to be helped in walking. She says she feels that she will soon die. The daughter tries to comfort and reassure her. The mother says how sorry she is that they have lost their money and must work for a living, and how she hates to think of leaving the girl alone and unprotected at her death. She commands her to continue pure, good and true, warns her that her beauty is a perilous gift for a poor girl who must work for her living, and urges her to hide it as much as possible from the sight of all men.

The mother takes a lacquered wooden bowl and places it on her daughter's head, warning her not to take it off. The bowl comes down over her face, hiding it.

Scene II

Announced—*The scene is the home of a rich farmer.*

Enter the farmer and his wife, who is delicate. They talk of the wife's delicate health and the fact that she needs some one to wait on her. The farmer suggests the Maid-with-the-Bowl-on-her-Head. They then discuss this girl, and the possible reasons for her wearing so queer a head-dress. The wife tells how the people laugh at her and make fun of her, and how the village young men tease her and try to get a peep under the bowl.

The farmer says that he has had her working all summer in his fields and has found her industrious and patient under the ridicule of other workers. They decide to engage her.

The farmer goes out and brings her in. The wife is kind to her. The girl shows that she is a good worker, and is engaged.

Scene III

Announced—*The scene is the farmer's house, some months later.*

Enter the farmer's wife and maiden aunt, and sit on the floor in Japanese custom. They discuss the son of the house, who is visiting at home. They speak of how much money he has made in Kyoto, and marvel that he remains so long with them instead of staying only a week-end, as in times past, and

then returning to his business. The maiden aunt speaks of him as "your son" and "my nephew," thus showing who she is.

At last the aunt, in the manner of a malicious gossip, says that she thinks the Maid-with-the-Bowl-on-her-Head may have something to do with it. The mother is amazed. The girl has proved a good servant, she says, and indeed has made herself so beloved that the farmer and his wife treat her more like a daughter than a servant. But the mother is sure her son is not "interested" in the girl.

The aunt insists, saying that the girl is all right in her way, but only a servant and no fit mate for the son of the house, that the couple have made too much of her and she is now taking advantage of them. The aunt questions why she wears the ridiculous bowl, and insinuates that it is to hide her ugliness and give herself a reputation for beauty.

The mother now regrets that she has treated the girl so well, although she is still not quite convinced that the aunt is right.

The aunt sees the girl approaching and suggests that they hide, which they do.

Enter the girl and the son of the house. He is making love to her. He peeps under the bowl and says how beautiful is the glimpse he gets of her. He tried to take off the bowl, but it will not come. He proposes to her, and she is just going to accept him when the aunt jumps out of her hiding place, followed by the mother. They heap all manner of

abuse upon the girl, who weeps, while the son defends her, and declares that he will marry her, whatever they say. She goes off weeping, as the father comes on. He is told the state of affairs, and at first sides with his wife, but when the son says he will be married to the Maid-with-the-Bowl-on-her-Head, he advises that they give in, as it will be of no avail to object.

So the girl is called back and told that they give their unwilling consent, because their son is so headstrong in his determination. But the girl refuses to wed him. They are first amazed and then indignant and angry. They abuse her more than ever for refusing him and call her an ungrateful young minx. Doesn't she think her master's son is good enough for her? The young man entreats, but to no avail.

In a high state of wrath, they all go off, leaving the girl alone with the son. Once more he entreats her to marry him, but she, weeping, says she can not, and begs that he will leave her.

She lies down, one elbow on the floor and her head in her hand. She bemoans her situation and wishes her mother were still alive to advise her. She tells how much she loves the young man, but how she thinks it her duty not to marry him, lest she bring discord into the family where she has been treated so kindly. Gradually she falls asleep. Her mother comes to her as in a dream. She sits up and holds out her arms to her.

The mother tells her that she may, without scruple,

yield to the prayers of her lover and to the wishes of her own heart. Then the mother vanishes.

The girl awakes, and, very happy, runs off to tell the young man the good news.

[*Remember that a Japanese woman always walks and runs with quick tiny steps.*]

Scene IV

Announced—*The scene is the rich farmer's house on the wedding day.*

Enter the bride, mother, father, aunt, bridegroom and as many others as are desired.

The father says it is time the bowl should be taken off, now that the maid is a bride, and she consents. He tries to remove it, but cannot. The others then try, pulling it this way and that, but they can not move it, and she cries out with pain and distress.

At last the bridegroom insists that they go on with the ceremony and drink together three times three, in token that they are man and wife. He orders the Sake cups to be brought in, and he and she each take one. As soon as she touches it to her lips, the bowl tumbles off her head, and from it comes a shower of precious jewels.

[*The jewels are bits of glass and beads. They may be placed in a paper bag, inside the bowl. Just before they take the cups this bag can be broken by the girl, who has put her finger up under the bowl and poked a hole in it. As the bag is on the top*

of her head, the jewels will not come out until the bowl tumbles off.]

Then all pick up the jewels, exclaiming about their brilliance and beauty. But more than that, they gaze upon the bride, admiring her beauty, and all ends happily.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

CHARACTERS—*A father, three daughters, and the* BEAST *make up the cast.*

COSTUMES—*The two elder daughters wear fussy clothes with much jewelry.* BEAUTY *is simply dressed. The father is an old man, and walks with a cane. The* BEAST'S *costume can be made of a fur rug, a fur coat or a fur robe. If there is no fur to be had, make it of a brown or green cloth. As he is enchanted to take this ugly shape, he can look like anything at all that is convenient. For the roses, use real flowers, paper flowers, which you can make, or cloth flowers, if you have some that have been taken off an old hat. Any other flower can be substituted for the rose by changing* BEAUTY'S *request. Any plant makes a good rose bush in which to stick the flowers.*

SCENE I

ANNOUNCED—*The first scene is in* BEAUTY'S *new home, after the family has lost its money.*

The two older sisters enter and talk in discontented way of their present life on the farm, how

they hate it, how they would love to go back to the city, where there are theatres and balls and dinners, and how dreadful it is to be poor and have nothing to do. Then they notice the room needs dusting, so they call Beauty to dust it. When she comes in, they abuse her. They tell her she is contented with her condition because she is stupid. She dusts and sweeps as they order her to, and is very sweet.

Enter father with the good news that one of his ships, which he thought lost, has come in, and he may get back some of the money. The sisters are rejoiced, and tell him to hasten to the ship, and to bring them back fine dresses, and jewels, and trinkets. Each describes what she wants.

The father asks Beauty what she wants, and she asks him to bring her a rose. Then he goes off. The sisters tell Beauty she must do all the work while he is away, as they will be too busy planning for their brilliant future to think of anything else.

Scene II

Announced—*The second scene is laid in the* Beast's *garden.*

Enter the father. He addresses the invisible fairy who owns the castle, thanking her for the fine food, the night's lodging and the beautiful clothes which he found in the castle, although no host was in sight. He says that he was hungry when he arrived, and cold and discouraged, because the goods which came

on his ship were all used up to pay his lawyers' fees.

He is just going off, when he spies the rose bush, and remembers his promise to Beauty. He says: "Here is the rose for Beauty," and plucks it. There is a great roar and the Beast appears. The Beast roars at him that he is an ungrateful wretch to steal his roses after receiving such hospitality at his hands. The father falls on his knees, and, telling him that he is only taking a rose to his daughter, entreats forgiveness.

The Beast says that he must die, unless one of his daughters will come of her own free will to die in his place. The father pleads in vain for mercy, and at last goes off weeping.

Scene III

Announced—*The third scene is in* Beauty's *home.*

The sisters sit about talking of the expected return of the father and of all they are to do with the wealth he brings. Beauty is working under their harsh orders. The father enters, sorrowing. They ask what is the matter, and he hands the rose to Beauty, saying he has paid dearly for it. Then he tells of his loss of the money from the ship and his adventures with the Beast.

The sisters accuse Beauty of bringing about her father's death by her unreasonable request for a rose. She says she will not bring about his death, as she is going to the Beast to die in his place. In

vain the father pleads with her, but she insists, saying she will give up her life with joy to save her father and show her love for him.

Beauty and her father go to prepare for their trip. The sisters rub their eyes with onion, so that they will weep and look as though they were sorry. Beauty and the father return. They say good-by, with many tears on the part of the sisters.

Scene IV

Announced—*The fourth scene is in the* Beast's *house.*

Enter Beauty and the father, clinging to each other in fright. There is a roar outside, and the father urges her again to go home and let him stay. But she refuses. The Beast enters and tells the father to go home and never come again. The father leaves.

The Beast tells her that everything in the house is hers, that she is mistress, and can command whatever she likes. She says he is very kind. He asks if she does not think him ugly, and she says yes, but his heart is kind, and when she thinks of that he seems not so ugly. He asks her to marry him, which frightens her, for fear lest, on refusing, he should eat her up. But she finally answers "No."

He tells her go look over the castle and see the beautiful rooms and gowns he has provided for her. They both go off.

Scene V

Announced—*The fifth scene is in the* Beast's *castle, several months later.*

Beauty is reading. The Beast comes in and they talk. Then he asks her again to marry him, and she says it grieves her much to always refuse, but she can never be his wife, although she likes him very much and wants to be his friend.

He asks if she will always stay with him. She says she would, if it were not for her father, who is ill, and that she will die of sorrow if she cannot see him. The Beast consents to her going home for a visit, and she promises to come back in a week, as she says he cannot live without her.

Scene VI

Announced—*The sixth scene is in the* Beast's *garden, ten days later.*

The Beast enters, very weak, and finally sinks in exhaustion on the ground. Beauty enters, sees him, bends over him in distress. He opens his eyes, and says that she forgot her promise, and he had resolved to die of hunger, as she did not come back. She begs him to live, and says that she loves him and will marry him. She has seen how disagreeable are her sisters' husbands, and knows now that beauty is not as important as kindness.

The Beast then, casting off his disguise, jumps to

his feet as a beautiful young prince. He tells her that he was enchanted until some maiden should consent to marry him. He has great wealth and is prince of a large kingdom, to which he will take her. His good fairy will turn the wicked sisters into stone statues, but the father they will take with them. Beauty is delighted. Making plans for the future, they go off.

HANSEL AND GRETEL

CHARACTERS—*The people in the play are* HANSEL *and* GRETEL, *their* MOTHER *and* FATHER *and the* OLD WITCH.

COSTUMES—*They wear the peasant costumes of the Black Forest.* GRETEL *and her* MOTHER *have bright dresses, with bodices if possible, caps and aprons. Find a bright-colored blouse and knickerbockers for the* BOY *and his* FATHER. HANSEL *has a little cap with a feather in it. As for the* WITCH, *you all know what she should wear: a long dress, pointed cap, specks, and a cane, on which she hobbles about. Of course her voice is shrill.*

SCENE I

ANNOUNCED—*The first scene is laid in the home of* HANSEL *and* GRETEL.

They are working, Hansel mending a broom and Gretel knitting. They talk, saying how tired they are; they have been working all day; their father and mother are very poor and they do not have enough food to eat; how hungry they are; how they would like one good meal; how they would like to play.

Then they decide they have worked enough and will play a little like other children who are not so poor. It would be nice not to have to spend all day making brooms and knitting socks, but to have a little fun now and then. So they drop their work, jump up and begin to dance and sing.

They are having a fine time, when in comes their mother, who has been out working. She is very cross when she sees them playing, and scolds them. Then she looks at their work to see how much they have finished and finds little done. Still cross, she hands them a basket and tells them to go out into the wood and not to dare to return until it is full of strawberries. The children go out. The mother sits down and cries. She says how discouraged she is because they have nothing to eat and no money. The father comes in, singing. On his arm is a basket. His wife asks him how he can be so gay when there is nothing in the house to eat. But he takes packages of food from his basket. She is overjoyed. Where did he get them?

He tells her that he has had a fine day, and has sold many brooms. He knew that there was to be a festival in the village during the coming week, so he went about calling out for all to buy brooms to sweep out their houses and make clean for the festival. He picks up the broom Hansel dropped, puts it over his shoulder, marches up and down, showing his wife how he called out his wares and made so much money. The mother is delighted. She picks

up the parcels, naming over what is in them and saying what she will have for supper.

The father asks where the children are. His wife frowns and becomes cross again. She says she does not know and she does not care. She tells how they played when they should have worked and that she sent them off into the forest.

The father is at once worried and anxious to think that the children are alone in the black, gloomy forest with night coming on.

He asks his wife if she does not remember the wicked witch who has a gingerbread house in the forest and attracts children by her cakes and sweets so that she may put them in her oven, bake them into gingerbread cakes and eat them up.

The mother then begins to worry and is sorry she was so cross. They decide to hunt for the children, and go off.

Scene II

Announced—*The scene is the Black Forest near the* Witch's *house.*

Place three chairs—the kind with bars in the back—across one corner to make a cage. On the other side is an oven. This can be made in a variety of ways, according to what you have on hand. A big wooden box, with a curtain dropped over it, would do. A doghouse would be fine. Or an oven can be made by

putting a piece of dark cloth over the end of a sofa or large chair. The beauty of a witch's oven is that it doesn't need to look like a real oven—that is the witchery of it—so you can use nearly anything.

The mother and father come in. They say how tired they are because they have been walking all night, but they have found no trace of their lost children and fear the witch has caught them. [*They do not notice the cage.*]

They go off.

Hansel and Gretel come in, yawning and shivering. They say how cold it was sleeping in the woods. Gretel says she wishes they had not eaten all the strawberries. Yes, answers Hansel, just to think that after they had spent so long picking them and had found so many, they should have been so foolish as to eat them all up, so that they were afraid to go home. But how good they tasted. "Yum-yum!" How they wish they had some now! Only one way to get them, and that is to pick them, they remark. They begin to pick them.

In looking for strawberries, Hansel spies the cage. He shows it to his sister, and they examine it, wondering what it is. Maybe it is for pets. They speak of different pets which might be kept there.

Then Gretel spies the gingerbread house up in the woods. [*She can just see it out the door or window, but it is not visible to the audience.*] She points it out to Hansel and they both speak with

delight of the walls of cake, the roof of tarts, the sugar windows, the gable of raisins and the ginger cookie fence.

They decide they will go to it and nibble some of the goodies from the walls and windows. But just then the witch appears. She has a rope in her hand. "Ah, has, my sweet children," she cries, and throws the rope around Hansel's head like a lasso. He struggles to get away, but cannot. Gretel cries and beseeches the witch to let him go. The witch tells her how she is going to cook Hansel until he is nice and tender. While she is talking to Gretel, Hansel loosens the noose, and gets free of it. He whispers to Gretel: "Let us run away quick!" and they start.

When the witch sees he is free, she waves her hand wildly, saying magical words, and commanding both children to stand motionless. They do so, enchanted. Then she leads Hansel to the cage, and puts him inside. She orders Gretel to go to the house and get dainties with which to feed him. While Gretel is gone, the witch gloats over him and tells him how many children she has cooked to gingerbread and eaten, after she has stuffed them to bursting with goodies to make them sweet.

Gretel returns with goodies on a tray, and the witch makes Hansel eat, much against his will. She tells him to put out his finger that she may see how fat it is. He puts out a stick he picks up from the ground, and she is angry that he is so skinny. Then the witch says she must try magic to make him

fat, and will ride around the house on her witch's broomstick. Getting on her stick, she rides off.

Hansel and Gretel plot to do away with the witch. They cannot tell how they will do it, but they will be on the watch.

The witch rides back and tells Hansel to again poke out his finger. He again gives her the stick to feel, and she is much distressed to find it still thin. At last she decides to eat Gretel first, as she is plumper and juicier. So she tells her to get in the oven and see how the gingerbread cookies are getting along. Gretel pretends to be stupid, and says she does not know how she can manage to get into the oven. The witch, out of patience, says Gretel can do it easily, that even she herself, old and stiff though she be, would have no trouble. She would do it so—and she bends half her body in the door to show how.

Hansel now motions to Gretel to shove the old witch in, acting it out in pantomime. Gretel understands, pushes her in, and closes the door. The witch shrieks, Gretel opens the cage and Hansel is free. They hop and dance about in joy. The father and mother come on and are rejoiced to find their lost children.

The children tell of the wonderful house, and they all decide to go up and have their fill of the cake walls, the tart roof and the sugar windows.

THE LITTLE LAME PRINCE

This Rainy-Day Play is taken from Miss Mulock's book, "The Little Lame Prince," which, of course, you all know. If, perchance, you have never read it, you have a treat in store for you. It is not necessary to read the story in order to give this play, but it will help a good deal in making up the conversations.

CHARACTERS—DOLL, PRINCE, REGENT, GODMOTHER, COURT NURSE, TOWER NURSE, DEAF MUTE, *and* COURTIERS. *The more* COURTIERS *the better, although only two are necessary.* TOWER NURSE *and* DEAF MUTE *can be* COURTIERS *in the first act.*

COSTUMES—*The* PRINCE *and* COURTIERS *should be dressed in court costume. The women wear long trains, beads and bracelets. The men wear knickerbockers or bloomers, and caps or hats, with feathers or buckles in them. If you can find an old coat with light satin lining, turn it wrong side out; a bit of lace sewed in cuffs and sleeves complete the costume.*

FAIRY GODMOTHER *wears cape and hood; she hobbles about with a cane.* TOWER NURSE *has on big apron and cap.* DEAF MUTE *wears*

bloomers reaching way below his knees, a blouse, gay scarf and small cap. How about blacking his face with burnt cork?

Scene I

Announced—*The scene is the palace, the day of the baptism of the* Baby Prince.

Enter two courtiers. They talk about baptism of the baby prince which is to take place. They tell how pretty the baby is, how fond and proud the king and queen are and what an elaborate ceremony and feast has been prepared. They speak also of the illness of the queen.

Enter court nurse with baby [*doll*] in long clothes. She is cross, disagreeable and vain. She arranges her train, forgetting the baby. Drops baby. Is scared. Picks him up. Courtiers look at him and say they guess he is not hurt. She makes them promise not to tell.

The fairy godmother appears suddenly. The courtiers are amazed. "Take care and don't let the baby fall again," she says. The nurse answers her indignantly, calling her "old woman," bidding her call the baby the "prince" and to keep away, as his royal highness is going to sleep. The Godmother insists that she is his godmother and must kiss him. All the courtiers are angry, and tell her to stand back. They call her all kinds of names. But she says she is a friend of the king's wife, the

queen, that the king is soon to hear some bad news and that she will be the baby's godmother, since the nurse dropped him, and help him in the future. "Be called by a new name, which nobody ever thought of. Be Prince Dolor, in memory of your mother Dolores," she says to the baby, kissing him.

All are very angry and ask what she means by "in memory of" his mother. They try to seize her and strike her with their staffs, but she slips away and vanishes.

A bell or gong off stage begins to toll. Every one counts. It tolls twenty. Someone says that that is the age of the young queen. They talk of what the old woman said. A courtier enters and announces the queen is dead. All go off sorrowing.

Scene II

Announced—*The scene is the throne room of the palace, several years later.*

[*Make a throne of rug or couch cover put over an armchair.*] Enter two courtiers. They talk of court happenings. The old king has been dead some time and his brother, as regent, is ruling for the little prince. They speak of the prince, what a shame it is that he is crippled; he will never be able to walk, because of that fall he had.

Trumpet or horn. The regent approaches. He enters and sits on the throne. He sends for the prince. The prince comes creeping in. He cannot

walk, but can creep or walk if holding on to a person or the furniture [*like a baby*]. His uncle asks him how he is and tells him he is going to send him off to the mountains where he will get well and strong. The prince is very happy. Goes off. The regent asks in a whisper if the criminal and the mute are here. He is told "Yes," and orders that they be brought on.

A woman, followed by the deaf mute, rushes in and throws herself at his feet, beseeching him to forgive her for her crime. He tells her that he will not have her killed, as she deserved. She thanks him. He then tells what she is to do. She and the deaf mute are to take the little prince to a lonely tower in the middle of a plain, where she is to take care of him as long as he lives. So long will her life be granted to her. When he dies, she shall die. The mute will bring them food. If she ever speaks to the prince one word about his true condition, which he will soon forget, being so young, she will be killed immediately and a new nurse found. She thanks the king for his mercy and goes off with the mute.

Scene III

Announced—*The scene in Hopeless Tower.*

The prince is sitting on the floor playing. He still creeps. The nurse is there and they talk. They say "this is the day the deaf mute comes." Noise outside; the prince goes to the window, looks out

and says it is his horse. In a few minutes the mute climbs in the window [*or, if that is impossible, comes through the door.*] The prince makes him understand, although the mute can hear nothing and cannot talk. The mute makes signs that he has something in the basket which he carries. He opens it and brings out toys. The prince is delighted and starts playing with them. He shows them to the mute, who is quite fond of the little boy. They talk in sign language. Then the mute goes and the nurse says she is going into the kitchen to cook a pie. That pleases the prince. She goes.

The prince plays for a few minutes and then grows tired of his toys. He says he wishes he had something else to play with—a person, a real live person, who would be fond of him. "Oh, I want some one, dreadfully, dreadfully!"

The godmother appears behind him and taps on the floor with her cane. He asks who she is; if, perhaps, she is his mother. She answers no, but she knew his mother. She has come to help him, but she could not come until he wished for her. She says she is his godmother, and he is very glad and invites her to play with him. They play and talk. He tells of his books and toys, and the nurse and the mute, but says that he longs for a little boy to play with. She can not bring him a little boy, but she has a present for him, a magic traveling robe. That will make him happy. [*Gives it to him.*] He can see no sense in having a traveling robe when he is shut up in a

tower and she starts to explain, when there is a sound at the door. She vanishes and the nurse comes in. [*The robe is a piece of dark cloth.*]

"Nurse," he says, "tell me something. You always call me prince; shall I ever be a king?"

She hesitates. He begs her to tell him. At last she says she cannot tell him because she will lose her life if she ever speaks a word about it to him, but she will write it. He gets his slate. She writes, and he reads aloud: "You are a king. Your wicked uncle, who is the regent until you become of age, has shut you up in this tower. I am condemned to death, but my life is to be spared as long as you live and I take care of you." She tells that her only hope is in his escaping and fighting for his own rights and for her. They talk about it a while and then she says it is time for him to go to bed.

Scene IV

Announced—*The scene is the Tower.*

The prince enters with the magic robe, kisses it and says how happy it makes him. He tells of the many times he has been out traveling on it. He says he sits on it and tells it where to go. Then he sails all over the world, high up in the sky. He speaks of the countries he has seen, hills, mountains, ocean; all the different animals and peoples and great cities. When he wants to go out, he says "Abracadabra,

dum, dum," and when he wants to go home he says, "Abracadabra, tum, tum, ti."

He then wishes for his godmother. She appears. What does he want and where has he been lately? He tells her of his wonderful rides, but says he saw something to-day he did not understand. He peeped through the skylight of a great palace and saw a man lying very still on the bed. Outside, everywhere in the streets, there was fighting and people were killing each other. The godmother explains the man was his uncle, that he is dead and that the whole land is in a state of revolution. Then she vanishes.

The prince wonders where the nurse is. He calls her again and again. He goes to the door and calls. No answer. He looks out of the window. No one is in sight.

He talks out loud to himself. This is what must have happened: When the nurse learned that the wicked uncle had died, she escaped from the tower. She has left cooked food for him, but at the end of a few days it will be gone, and he will starve. There is no way to escape, and the mute is not there. He must do everything for himself. He goes out into the kitchen to get his meal.

Scene V

Announced—*The scene is the same.*

Enter the prince. He is tired and weak. He says: "Five days have passed and my nurse does not

come back. Soon I shall have no more food and shall starve. If I must die I shall die like a king."

Trumpets outside. The prince, excited, goes to the window. No, it is not the mute, but a long procession of courtiers, in gay clothes, on horses. He describes them as he looks out. Enter the nurse and the courtiers by window. They explain to the prince how the nurse escaped with the mute and rode day and night from town to town, spreading the glad tidings that the prince, or rather the true king, had not been killed many years ago, but still lived in the lonely stone tower.

All the people, who were tired of revolution, rejoiced and decided to recall the young king. The regent's family has been driven from the palace, and all is in readiness for the new young king. The prince says he is delighted and will rule them as best he can, and hopes to make all his people happy. They crown him.

Then they tell him they will take him to the castle in an hour and leave him to get ready.

Alone, he looks about his tower room and bids farewell to his toys. He finds his magic cape and kisses it.

"It will be a new life in a new world, but I'll remember the old things still. And, oh! if, before I go, I could but once see my dear old godmother," he says.

The godmother appears. He asks if she will forsake him now, and she says no, she will always be with him. She tells him to set aside a room in the

top of the castle and there he will always find her and she will tell him more about his mother.

That makes him perfectly happy. As the sound of trumpets announces that the procession is coming to take him away, she vanishes. Then he folds up the magic robe, kisses it and hides it in his blouse [*or somewhere else where he can carry it*]. Now that he knows he will see her occasionally and that he has his robe he is happy and ready to go. The courtiers come in and lead him away in a stately procession.

THE MARRIAGE OF SIR GAWAIN

CHARACTERS—KING ARTHUR, ENCHANTER, OLD WOMAN, SIR GAWAIN, *and other* KNIGHTS, MESSENGER, *and people who answer the question.*

COSTUMES—*The* KING *and* KNIGHTS *may wear bloomers, blouse, sash, hat with plume, pumps with buckles, etc. The women wear capes or shawls.*

SCENE I

ANNOUNCED—*The scene is laid near the* ENCHANTER'S *Castle.*

Enter King Arthur, carrying his sword, Excalibur. He calls: "Come out, you rascally knight, and I will make short work of you. You have despoiled a beautiful orphan of her wealth and have cast her lover into a dungeon. No such wrongs go unpunished in my kingdom!"

The knight draws his sword, but as the enchanter approaches, it falls from his hand and his arm drops limp to his side.

His opponent then says that he is an enchanter, and that the land whereon the king stands is enchanted ground. He forces the king to bow before him and ask mercy.

After certain threats of cruel death, the enchanter at last promises him life and liberty on one condition: In a year and a day he is to return with the answer to a question. If the answer is wrong, he must forfeit his life, his wealth and his kingdom to the enchanter. If it is right, he may go free.

Arthur asks what is the question, and the enchanter answers: What is it every woman most desires?

Arthur says that it is an easy question, and thanking the enchanter for his clemency, goes off.

Scene II

Announced—*The scene is a roadway.*

Arthur stands watching the people go by. Each one he stops and asks the question. Each person gives him a different answer. [*Have at least five or six persons, and think of original answers.*]

He is satisfied with none of the answers. At last he bemoans the fact that his year is up and he must go back to deliver himself to the enchanter. As he starts to go off, an old hag appears. She is bent over, hobbles on a cane, and is clothed in a cape and a hood, which nearly hide her face. But as he looks at her, he draws back in disgust.

She chides him for being so uncourteous as not even to give her a friendly greeting, and says she might help. He asks how. She says he is on the way to meet the enchanter and relates the agree-

ment. He asks if she knows the answer as well as the question and she replies that she does.

Then he entreats her to tell him and promises her that if her answer be right, she may ask of him what she will and it will be granted. She makes him give his kingly oath and at last says: "What every woman most desires is her own way."

Then, chuckling, she hobbles off, calling back to him that she will come to remind him of his promise when he is free again.

He walks further and then calls to the enchanter. The enchanter appears and Arthur repeats one answer after another, but the enchanter says they are all wrong. "You have failed," cries the enchanter gleefully, "and now your life and lands are mine."

But Arthur bids him wait a moment, saying that he has one more answer, and he gives that of the old hag. The enchanter cries aloud with wrath and angrily admits that the answer is the right one. He says that Arthur must have met his sister, for she alone knew the answer, and then he goes off in a rage, leaving the king free.

Arthur calls for the old hag to come back and get her reward, but she does not answer.

Scene III

Announced—*The scene is Arthur's court.*

The knights, including Sir Gawain, sit about the

round table. Arthur tells his experience. They ask where the woman is and he says that he has looked everywhere for her, but can not find her.

A messenger approaches and says that a grisly, horrible old hag is at the door and wishes admittance, but so frightful are her looks that they dare not let her in. Arthur says to admit her, and immediately recognizes her.

He greets her kindly, telling her that he has looked for her everywhere in the forest near the enchanter's castle, and that he wishes to repay her for her service, for without her he would have lost life and lands. "Ask your boon, and whatever it is it shall be granted," he says.

She shakes all over as with palsy, when she speaks. She says it seems but a slight boon, when she considers how many brave and handsome knights she sees about her. She asks only one fair and courtly knight as her husband.

For a moment the knights are amazed and then send up a shout of laughter, ridiculing her request and the very idea that a fine young knight should be her husband. She glares at them, and they become silent.

Arthur is troubled. He begs her to ask for something more suited to her age, such as wealth and lands and a position in court. He does not see how he can give her a youth.

Then she scornfully rejects all his offers and sneers at his kingly faith, saying that before all the

world he has broken his promise to her. She starts to go off, when Sir Gawain rises and stops her. He says that the king, his uncle, has promised her any boon she might ask, and that he will offer himself as her bridegroom, that the king's word may not be broken.

The knights cry out to him not to do it, but he stands firm, and she promises that she will be his true wife. She will go adorn herself for the wedding and return anon. She hobbles off.

The king tries to dissuade Gawain, and the other knights make fun of the old hag. But he stands firm to his promise.

The hag hobbles in again, this time dressed in a white dress. Her face is concealed by the wedding veil. [*The paint which made her look like a hag has been removed.*]

Gawain, trembling with emotion, meets her and they are married by one of the men who is a priest. During the ceremony [*which may be only a few words*], she gradually rises from her crouching position. When it is over, she throws back her veil and appears young and beautiful.

Gawain sinks on one knee before her, kissing her hand, but she lifts him up, saying that he wed her when she was poor and ugly and now she will be a true and faithful wife, giving him all her great wealth and lands.

She explains that the enchanter was her brother, but she had offended him, so he changed her into the

ugly old hag, to be freed only if some young and courtly knight should of his own free will marry her. Arthur orders a great feast to celebrate the happy occasion and all go off happy.

LITTLE ROSETTE

CHARACTERS—KING, QUEEN, DOLL [*for baby*], HERMIT, ROSETTE, GREAT PRINCE, LITTLE PRINCE, NURSE, HER DAUGHTER, BOATSMAN, KING OF PEACOCKS, COURTIER *and* OLD MAN. *The* KING, QUEEN, HERMIT *and* FAIRY *in the first act can take other parts later on. The* BOATMAN *can be the* COURTIER.

COSTUMES—QUEEN *and* PRINCESS *wear long flowing gowns, beads and jewels. The* KING OF THE PEACOCKS *is decked out in bright-colored scarfs, and the* PRINCES *wear capes and tam-o'-shanters with feathers stuck in them, or anything else that looks princely.*

SCENE I

ANNOUNCED—*Scene one is laid in the castle.*

Enter king and queen, the queen carrying the doll. They both talk to the baby, petting her and saying how beautiful she is and that they are to have her christened to-day. They have chosen the prettiest name they could think of, Rosette.

The mother speaks of the custom of the fairies' coming to tell the fortune of babies on the day of their christening. She sends the king to call them.

After he leaves, a fairy appears. But the fairy, when asked to tell her fortune, looks at the baby and weeps, saying she has forgotten her book of magic. After much coaxing from the queen she says that the brothers of the princess will meet misfortune, perhaps death through her. The fairy goes off. The king returns and says he could not find the fairies. The queen weeps. The king asks what is the matter. The queen tells him of the prophecy. The king feels badly and they discuss what can be done. At last the king says the only way is to cut off the princess' head while she is little. The queen will not consent, so they finally decide to build a great tower and shut her up there for life, where she can do no harm. The family will visit her, but she will never be allowed outside.

Scene II

Announced—*Scene two is laid in the garden of the palace.*

Enter two princes. Now that their father and mother, the king and queen, are dead, they will bring the princess from her tower which she hates so much. They tell how, since she was a baby, she has been kept in the tower, although no one except the king and queen knew why. They will go and release her. They go off and return in a minute with the princess. She is delighted and runs about telling how nice it is

to be on the ground, how good the sunlight feels, how pretty the flowers are.

Then she spies a peacock in the distance, and asks what that beautiful bird is. They tell her. She is delighted with it and says she will never be happy until she is married to the king of the peacocks. She runs to get a closer view of the beautiful bird. The brothers plan to start out to find the king of the peacocks. They call her back and tell her their plans. She gives them a picture of herself, to take with them. All go off.

Scene III

Announced—*Scene three is at the bank of the river.*

Enter nurse and princess. She says how pleased she is that the brothers have at last found the king of the peacocks, that he has fallen in love with her from her picture and has sent for her to come to his kingdom to marry him.

They notice the river and ask each other how they are to get across. Enter boatman. The princess engages him to take them over in his boat. The nurse tells the princess to go ahead and they will follow. The princess goes off. The nurse whispers to boatman: "Do you want to make thousands of dollars?" The boatman says, yes. The nurse tells her plan, which is that they shall throw the princess overboard, put her beautiful dress and jewels on

the nurse's daughter, who shall appear before the king as the princess and marry him.

They call the daughter, who has been hiding nearby. She comes out. She is ugly and cross and cranky, a very disagreeable girl. They go off, the daughter scolding both mother and boatman.

Scene IV

Announced—*Scene four is at the king's palace.*

Enter king and courtier. They are very much excited because word has come the princess is in the land. The king looks at the photograph and wonders if she is as beautiful as it. The courtier says he heard people saying "How ugly she is!" The king answers that that must refer to some ugly dwarf she is bringing with her, as the picture shows her to be very beautiful, and her brothers say she is a hundred times more beautiful than the picture. If that is not true, he will cut off their heads.

Enter the nurse, bows before king, and says she has brought the princess. Goes off and brings on daughter. [*Daughter has hair done up in tight knob, and has black court plaster stuck on teeth, so she looks as though she has none. That will make any child look ugly.*]

The king is furious to see she is not beautiful like the picture. He paces up and down in anger, tearing his hair. He orders the nurse and daughter off; they flee in terror. Then he tells the courtier to

bring on the brothers, and he will punish the rascals. The courtier does so.

When they come he abuses them, telling them they are liars and rascals and beggars, trying to make him marry their hideous sister. He will have their heads cut off immediately. They do not understand, protest their sister is beautiful, and that they are a king and prince as great as the king of the peacocks, and beg for seven days to prove their innocence. The king grants it and all go off.

Scene V

Announced—*Scene five is laid outside the cottage of the* Old Man *who saved the life of the* Princess *and her dog.*

Enter princess and old man. The princess thanks the old man once more for having saved her from drowning. She says she is hungry. The old man is poor and has no food in the house. She says she will call her little dog, Frisk, and tell him to go and get the best roast and the sweetest cakes he can find in any kitchen in the village, as he did yesterday and the day before yesterday. They go off, whistling for the dog.

Enter king and courtier. The king holds on to his stomach and says how empty he feels. For three days he has had nothing to eat, and he is hungry. The courtier says perhaps he is bewitched, so that the food vanishes from his kitchen. The

courtier reminds him of the fact that the two brothers are to be beheaded to-day. The king says all right, he will be glad when it is done. They stand at one side as the old man and princess come on carrying a great basket.

The princess peeps in the basket and talks with delight of the roast and vegetables and pies and cakes and candy and cream puffs she sees inside. The courtier peeps over her shoulder, and cries out that that is his majesty's dinner. The old man and the princess are startled. The king is angry and shouts that they shall be beheaded with the brothers. The princess and the old man fall on their knees and beg for mercy. The old man begs that he shall be allowed to tell his story.

The king says all right, go ahead, but be brief, as he is almost famished and wants his dinner. The old man tells how he rescued the drowning princess, and the princess tells about the wicked nurse and her daughter. The king sees that she is beautiful like the picture, which he takes from his pocket and compares with her.

The courtier, who has gone out, returns with the two brothers, the nurse and daughter. The princes are rejoiced to see their sister. The nurse and daughter entreat forgiveness, and the king and princess are so happy they forgive them. The king takes the hand of the princess, and they lead off the happy procession.

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